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MEMORIALS OF COLEORTON

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BEING LETTERS FROM COLERIDGE WORDSWORTH AND HIS SISTER SOUTHEY AND SIR WALTER SCOTT

TO SIR GEORGE AND LADY BEAUMONT
OF COLEORTON, LEICESTERSHIRE
1803 TO 1834

Edited, with Introduction and Notes,

BY WILLIAM KNIGHT
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VOL. I.

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TO

LADY BEAUMONT

THESE LETTERS WRITTEN BY

THE GROUP OF POETS

THAT USED TO GATHER AT

COLEORTON, LEICESTERSHIRE

ARE

Dedicated

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

	PAGE
PREFACE, ...	vii
Coleridge to Sir George and Lady Beaumont, . .	1
Do. to do. do. . .	6
Do. to do. do. . .	12
Ode to Mont Blanc, by Coleridge, ...	26
Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont, . . .	30
Coleridge to do. . . .	38
Do. to do. . . .	43
Do. to Lady Beaumont, ...	52
Do. to Sir George Beaumont, . . .	55
Do. to do. . . .	58
Wordsworth to do. . . .	63
Coleridge to Sir George and Lady Beaumont, .	69
Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont, . . .	72
Do. to do. . . .	75
Do. to do. . . .	77
Do. to do. . . .	83
Do. to do. . . .	88
Do. to do. . . .	93

PAGE

Mr. Luff of Patterdale to his Wife, . . . 97
Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont, . . . 99
Do. to do. . . . 104
Do. to do. . . . 119
Do. to do. . . . 123
Do. to Lady Beaumont, ... 128
Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, . . 130
Do. to do. . . . 131
Do. to do. . . . 135
Do. to do. . . . 139
Do. to do. . . . 143
Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont, . . . 148
P.S. by Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, . 152
Dorothy Wordsworth to do. . 155
Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont, . . . 157
Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, . . 162
Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont, . . . 167
Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, . . 174
Do. to do. . . . 182
Do. to do. . . . 187
Wordsworth to do. . . . 191
Dorothy Wordsworth to do. . . . 210
Coleridge's Poem to Wordsworth, ... 213
Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, . . 219
Wordsworth to do. . . . 223

PREFACE.

A SHORT Preface will suffice as an introduction to these volumes.

While collecting materials for the Life of Wordsworth I had to pay occasional visits to Coleorton, in Leicestershire; and the late Sir George Beaumont, his son the present Baronet, and Lady Beaumont, kindly allowed me to examine (and to copy) all the letters they possessed, written by Wordsworth and his sister to their predecessors,—the Sir George and Lady Beaumont who lived at the beginning of this century. At the same time I found that there were letters from many other distinguished men in the library at the Hall; and, amongst them, some from Coleridge, from Southey, and from Sir Walter Scott. These men were associated in various ways with Wordsworth,

and—as their respective letters cast light on each other, and on their common friends, the Beaumonts—I suggested their publication in a Memorial Volume relating to Coleorton. The representatives of the writers of the letters, as well as the heirs of the recipients, kindly gave their consent to their publication in this form.

The pedigree of the Beaumonts of Coleorton may be traced to the times of William of Normandy. Robert de Beaumont, one of the 'Companions of the Conqueror,' came over to England in 1066.[1] Francis Beaumont, the dramatist—Fletcher's friend and fellow-worker —and Sir John Beaumont — Francis' elder brother, and author of *Bosworth Field*—were of the same family.

With Sir George, the seventh Baronet, the present mansion of Coleorton is specially identi-

[1] 'Rogier li Veil, eil de Belmont,
Assalt Engleis al primier front.'
Roman de Rou, l. 13,462.
(Compare *The Conqueror and his Companions*, by P. R. Planché, vol. i. pp. 203-216.)

fied. He rebuilt it, and by his friendship with the men of letters and artists of his time, he made the Hall a centre of associations which posterity will not willingly let die.

It lies about four miles south-east of Ashby-de-la-Zouche, in Leicestershire. The 'orton' is a corruption of *over-town*, or upper town,—the higher of two small townships, the other being *nether-town*. As a stratum of coal came to the surface, and was wrought, at the former of these villages, it was called Coal Overton, or Coalorton, hence Coleorton. The mines are very old. In the reign of Henry VIII., says an old chronicler, the fire 'did burn for many years together, and could not be quenched until that sulphurous and brimstony matter (whereupon it wrought) was utterly exhausted and consumed.' In the account of Leicestershire given in *The Worthies of England*, by Thomas Fuller, published in 1662, the following occurs:[1] 'Cole are digged up

[1] See the edition of 1811, vol. i. p. 560, and compare Burton's *Description of Leicestershire* (1622), and Nichols' *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*.

plentifully at Coleorton, in the hundred of West Goscott,—I say Coleorton, for there is another village called Cold-orton in this shire; an addition which no less truly than sadly would be prefixed to most towns in this country, if not warmed in winter with this underground fewell, that above ground is so much decayed.' It is difficult to say whether Fuller meant by this that the coal-mines were burning below ground, and that these 'nether fires' heated the surface of the country, or that since wood had become scarce, it was well that they had access to this 'underground fewell.' In the note which Nichols added to this paragraph, in the edition of 1811, he says: 'The coal-mines in this neighbourhood continue to be very extensively and very profitably worked. At Coleorton, Sir George Beaumont, Bart., has lately built a very elegant house, from a plan of my worthy friend, George Dance, Esq.'

This Sir George, the artist, was the son of the sixth Baronet, and of Rachel, daughter of Michael Howland of Stonehall, Dunmow, Essex.

He was born on the 6th November 1753, and succeeded to the family title in 1762, at the age of nine. He was educated first at Eton, and afterwards at New College, Oxford. In his twenty-fifth year he married Margaret Willes, daughter of John Willes, Esq. of Astrop, and granddaughter of Lord Chief-Justice Willes. In 1782 he travelled in Italy with his wife, and shortly after his return entered Parliament, representing the borough of Beer-Alston in the House of Commons for six years (1790 to 1796). In 1800 he planned, with Mr. Dance, the new family mansion. It was not completed, however, till 1807.

The relation in which Sir George Beaumont stood to the poets and artists of his day was a remarkable one, not without its parallel in literary history; but the Mæcenas of Coleorton—himself an artist and an art-collector—had the happiness of attaching *many* friends to himself by disinterested ties, and of thereby multiplying his own pleasures, and adding to his culture. He always thought that he received more than

he gave, in the interchanges of friendship. He certainly had the gift of calling out whatever was best in his friends.

He had visited the district of the English Lakes long before he became acquainted with its poets. Southey tells us that Sir George spent part of the summer in which he was married at Keswick. In 1803 he lodged for a time at Greta Hall, after Coleridge had taken up his abode in it; and he knew Coleridge before he met with Wordsworth. He was one of the first to appreciate the genius of these two men; and knowing that they had lived near each other in Somersetshire, where they wrote the *Lyrical Ballads* in concert, and were desirous to resume the easy and familiar intercourse of former days, he purchased a small property at Applethwaite, about three miles to the west of Greta Hall, on the southern flank of Skiddaw, and presented it to Wordsworth, whom as yet he had not seen. Sir George wrote thus to Wordsworth on the 24th October 1803:—

'I had a most ardent desire to bring you and

Coleridge together. I thought with pleasure on the increase of enjoyment you would receive from the beauties of Nature, by being able to communicate more frequently your sensations to each other; and that this would be a means of contributing to the pleasure and improvement of the world, by stimulating you both to poetical exertions.'

This wish was not to be realised. Several concurrent causes led Coleridge to leave Cumberland, and Wordsworth lived on at Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

Wordsworth's Sonnet suggested by the gift may be quoted, with the explanatory note which he dictated to Miss Fenwick regarding it:—

AT APPLETHWAITE, NEAR KESWICK.
1804.

BEAUMONT! it was thy wish that I should rear
A seemly Cottage in this sunny Dell,
On favoured ground, thy gift, where I might dwell
In neighbourhood with One to me most dear,
That undivided we from year to year
Might work in our high Calling—a bright hope
To which our fancies, mingling, gave free scope
Till checked by some necessities severe.

And should these slacken, honoured BEAUMONT! still
Even then we may perhaps in vain implore
Leave of our fate thy wishes to fulfil.
Whether this boon be granted us or not,
Old Skiddaw will look down upon the Spot
With pride, the Muses love it evermore.

The Fenwick note is as follows:—

'This was presented to me by Sir George Beaumont, with the view to the erection of a house upon it, for the sake of being near to Coleridge, then living and likely to remain at Greta Hall, near Keswick. The "severe necessities" that prevented this arose from his domestic situation. This little property, with a considerable addition that still leaves it very small, lies beautifully upon the banks of a rill that gurgles down the side of Skiddaw; and the orchard and other parts of the grounds command a magnificent prospect of Derwent Water, the mountains of Borrowdale, and Newlands.'

References to the purchase of this property will be found in the letters which follow (see especially Wordsworth's letter to Sir George Beaumont of October 14, 1803). In that letter he asks to be allowed to remain a sort of

'steward of the land,' with liberty to lay out the rent in planting, or any other improvement; and should he be ultimately unable to 'pitch his tent' upon it, he desired to restore it to Sir George, that *he* might present it to some one, who would be able to use it as originally proposed. It must however have been formally conveyed to Wordsworth in 1803, or 1804, as his daughter Dora pencilled on the MS. of the Fenwick note that her father had made it over to *her* when she was a 'frail, feeble monthling.'

At intervals—from 1803 to 1806—the Beaumonts visited Grasmere, and Wordsworth even hoped that they would be his permanent neighbours, during the summer or autumn months. Sir George was specially struck with the beauty of Loughrigg Tarn, so often likened to Lake Nemi in Italy, the *Speculum Dianæ*. He purchased the property, intending to build a summer cottage upon it. In his *Epistle to Sir George Beaumont from the South-West Coast of Cumberland*, written in 1811, Wordsworth refers to this once contem-

plated cottage, and in imagination he sees it built:—

> A glimpse I caught of that abode, by thee
> Designed to rise in humble privacy,
> A lowly dwelling, here to be outspread,
> Like a small hamlet, with its bashful head
> Half hid in native trees. Alas! 'tis not,
> Nor ever was; I sighed, and left the spot,
> And thought in silence, with regret too keen,
> Of unexperienced joys that might have been;
> Of neighbourhood, and intermingling arts,
> And golden summer days uniting cheerful hearts.

The house was never built; the tarn was resold, and the money obtained from it, given by Beaumont to Wordsworth, was spent by him in the purchase of yew-trees, which he planted in Grasmere churchyard, where they still grow, and one of which now overshadows the poet's grave.

In the autumn of 1806, their Grasmere home at Dove Cottage having become too small for the Wordsworth family, Sir George Beaumont offered them the use of the farm-house adjoining Coleorton Hall. He had been occupying

it himself, while alterations were going on at the Hall; but during the winter of 1806, and the spring and part of the autumn of 1807, it became the temporary residence of the Wordsworths—Dorothy, the poet's sister, and Sarah Hutchinson, his wife's sister, accompanying them.

As will be seen from the letters which follow, Sir George and Lady Beaumont were greatly helped by Wordsworth in the formation of their new winter garden at the Hall. A minute description of this garden, constructed out of an old quarry, will be found in pp. 191-209 of this volume. Before he left Grasmere Wordsworth wrote his opinion as to the best way in which the grounds should be laid out; but it was during that winter of 1806-7 that his designs were matured, and definitely adopted at Coleorton. It was a refreshment to him to turn from poetic labour to the superintendence of the garden, and the direction of the workmen; his fundamental principle (which Coleridge had also stated) being that 'the house should belong to the country, and not the country be an appendage to the house.' To

enlarge on this is unnecessary, as the letters which follow explain themselves; but it will interest many to know that the winter garden at Coleorton retains at this day more memorials of Wordsworth than the grounds of Rydal Mount or of Fox Howe.

Coleridge returned from the Continent in the autumn of 1806. He reached Coleorton on Christmas day, on a visit to Wordsworth; and there it was, in the month of January 1807, in these Leicestershire fields, on the Ashby road, in the bypaths round the Hall—and possibly during walks extended to the forest region of Charnwood,—that he renewed the fellowship of the old Quantock days and, in the farm-house at nights, listened to the solemn recitation of *The Prelude* by its author, and afterwards wrote his own memorable lines upon his brother-bard, and his

> Orphic tale indeed,
> A tale of high and passionate thoughts
> To their own music chanted.

In the spring of 1807 Wordsworth went with

his wife to London for a month; his sister Dorothy, and Sarah Hutchinson, remaining in Leicestershire with the children. Walter Scott returned with him to Coleorton in the autumn.

Several of Wordsworth's poems were composed at Coleorton. The *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle* was murmured out on the path between the farm-house and the Hall, where also the sonnet beginning

> Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
> One of the mountains,

was composed. Other sonnets, as well as the poem entitled *Gipsies,* and the lines to the nightingale beginning

> O Nightingale! thou surely art
> A creature of a fiery heart

were thought out in the glades, or on the roads, or amid the shadowy recesses of the garden.

But it is with his *Inscriptions* for the grounds at Coleorton that the place is chiefly associated. Two of these were written during his residence

in 1808, and other two at Grasmere in 1811. Only three of them, however, were actually cut on stone, and set up in the grounds. The one commencing

> The embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine

was placed near a magnificent cedar-tree, which was unfortunately blown down in a gale in 1854. Though replanted, it fell a second time, during the great storm of 1880, and perished. The memorial stone remains, somewhat injured, and the inscription is more than half obliterated.

The second inscription, written in 1808, 'at the request of Sir George Beaumont, and in his name, for an Urn, placed by him at the termination of a newly-planted avenue,' began thus :—

> Ye Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn,
> Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return ;
> And be not slow a stately growth to rear
> Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
> Till they have learned to frame a darksome aisle ;
> That may recall to mind that awful Pile
> Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
> In the last sanctity of fame is laid.

These 'Lime-trees,' planted eighty years ago,

now form 'a stately growth of pillars,' 'a darksome aisle,' as described in the lines; and the 'Urn' remains as it was set up in 1807, at the end of the avenue.

The last of the inscriptions set up at Coleorton was written by Wordsworth in 1811, during a morning walk with his sister from Brathay to Grasmere, and sent by her to Lady Beaumont. It was cut in stone at the end of a terrace walk, at right angles to the avenue of lime-trees, overlooking the garden, where it is still to be seen, lichen-covered and weather-worn.

Perhaps the most interesting poem, however, connected with Coleorton is the sonnet which Wordsworth addressed to Lady Beaumont in 1807, and which he published the same year. It requires no comment.

TO LADY BEAUMONT.

Lady! the songs of spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers,
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall; and still, as fancy wove

The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, lady! which your feet shall rove.
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

In 1815 Wordsworth inscribed the first collected edition of his Poems to Sir George, with the following Epistle Dedicatory:—

'My dear Sir George,—Accept my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these Poems to you. In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel a particular satisfaction; for, by inscribing them with your name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the Collection—as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder, also, you have a peculiar claim,—for some of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets of your

Name and Family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace Dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood. Nor is there any one to whom such parts of this Collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself—who have composed so many admirable Pictures from the suggestions of the same scenery. Early in life, the sublimity and beauty of this region excited your admiration; and I know that you are bound to it in mind by a still strengthening attachment.

'Wishing and hoping that this Work may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship, which I reckon among the blessings of my life, I have the honour to be, my dear Sir George, yours most affectionately and faithfully,

'William Wordsworth.

'*Rydal Mount, Westmoreland,*
'*February* 1, 1815.'

Sir George's own work as a landscape artist is referred to in this Dedication. An early picture of his suggested one of Wordsworth's most characteristic poems, viz., the stanzas on *Peele*

Castle in a Storm. This small oil-painting still hangs in the picture-gallery at Coleorton, and to all who see it there, and remember to what it gave rise, it will recall

> The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream.

Another of the poems was suggested by a picture, mainly a cloud-scene, from the neighbourhood of Coleorton, painted by Sir George, and sent to Wordsworth :—

> Praised be the Art whose subtle power could stay
> Yon Cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape ;
> Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
> Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day ;
> Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
> Ere they were lost within the shady wood ;
> And showed the bark upon the glassy flood
> For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
> Soul-soothing Art ! which morning, noon-tide, even,
> Do serve, with all their changeful pageantry ;
> Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
> Here, for the sight of mortal men, hast given
> To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
> The appropriate calm of blest Eternity !

Illustrations of *The White Doe of Rylstone*, of

The Thorn, of *Lucy Gray,* and of *Peter Bell* were also drawn by Sir George Beaumont, and engraved in several editions of Wordsworth's Poems.[1]

Sir George's relations with some of his contemporary artists were nearly as intimate as with the poets. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Haydon, Wilkie, Lawrence, Cozens, and Gibson were all his friends, and his kindness to young and aspiring artists was great. He was one of the first to detect the genius of Wilkie; and after the success of *The Village Politician,* in 1806—Wilkie being then twenty years of age—he commissioned him to paint *The Blind Fiddler.* In the same year Wilkie introduced Haydon to Sir George Beaumont, who called on him, and became one of his early patrons. He at once took Haydon to see and study the pictures in Ashburnham House, and in Lord Stafford's gallery.

A few extracts from Haydon's Autobiography

[1] Sir George's illustrations will be found in the edition of 1815 (in both volumes), in the edition of 1820 (in each of the four volumes), and in the original quarto edition of *The White Doe,* and the original octavo of *Peter Bell.*

will cast light on Sir George and Lady Beaumont, and their life at Coleorton Hall. He wrote thus in 1807:—

'I must go back a little in order to recall a very interesting letter which I received from Sir George Beaumont while painting my picture, and in the midst of all the difficulties I experienced in bringing it to a close. This letter showed his real heart when in the country, free from the agitation and excitement of London life. He had a family house at Dunmow, Essex; where his venerable mother lived in seclusion, and where Sir George generally visited her between Christmas and spring. Lord Mulgrave used to quiz him about never allowing any of his friends to come to Dunmow, declaring that Sir George had something snug there, which he did not wish to be seen or known.

'He wrote me—

'"*Dunmow, Feb.* 28, 1807.

* * * * *

'"It, at first thought, seems rather hard that such a Birmingham gentleman[1] should, in the multitude of his converts, proceed without difficulty and with great exaltation, whilst you meet

[1] 'I am convinced Sir George alluded to Lawrence.—B. R. H.'

with struggles and with disappointments; yet when you recollect the object of his vanity—that it has little to do with the mind, that it will never be approved of by an opinion worthy the consideration of a man of sense, and that it is scarcely more valuable than the applause a rope-dancer receives for his monkey tricks—he certainly ceases to be an object of envy, whilst you have the satisfaction of reflecting upon the value of the object you have in view, and that although the present pains and troubles are distressing, yet, when once achieved, not only will your reward be the approbation of every man of real taste, but a proper application of the power acquired will impart useful pleasure, and ultimately promote the causes of religion and virtue.

"'I should add that at the time I am undervaluing mere flippancy of pencil, where pencilling, exclusive of expression, is the object of the artist (which, by the way, is no bad receipt to make a French painter), yet I by no means approve of that blundering, ignorant, clumsy execution which some have indulged themselves in. The touch, to my feeling, should be firm, intelligent, and decisive, and evince a full knowledge of the object. This will never be attained but by profound knowledge of drawing, which, I am sorry to say, has been much neglected. . . .

'"I contemplate the friendship which subsists between yourself and Wilkie with peculiar pleasure. Long may it last, uninterrupted by misunderstanding of any sort! I am confident it will not only render your studies pleasing, but your honest criticisms of each other cannot fail of producing mutual advantage. You cannot impress your mind with too exalted an idea of your high calling!"'

'. . . I soon discovered that the accurate study of a language employs more time than can be spared from any other leading pursuit. I wrote to Sir George about it, and in a few days heard again from Dunmow. Among other things, he wrote—

'"*March* 23, 1807.

'"If you determine to master the languages, it will cost you much time and much labour, and for the life of me I cannot conceive how it will advance your great object. If you saved your eyes, or strengthened your constitution by air and exercise in the process, I should certainly recommend the undertaking, but on the contrary, it will consume the little time you have to spare for the care of your health, which, whatever a youthful desire of triumph may at present suggest, is as necessary as any other qualification for an artist, and will, without due attention, before you are

aware of it, stand a chance of being irretrievably lost. If you think it necessary to paint from Homer, the subject and costume may certainly be as well known from translations and English comments as from the original.

'"But, for my own part, I have always doubted the prudence of painting from poets; for if they are excellent, you have always the disadvantage of having an admirable picture to contend with already formed in the minds of the circle—nay, different pictures in different minds of your spectators,—and there is a chance, if yours does not happen to coincide (which is impossible in all cases), that justice will not be done you.

'"This remark is particularly applicable to painting from Shakespeare, when you not only have the powerful productions of his mind's pencil to contend with, but also the perverted representations of the theatres; which have made such impressions on most people in early life, that I, for my part, feel it more difficult to form a picture in my mind from any scene of his that I have seen frequently represented, than from the works of any other poet.

'"Now, if you choose judiciously a subject from history, you avoid these disadvantages, and the business will be to make the poetry yourself, and he who cannot perform this will in vain attempt to echo the poetry of another. You have asked

my opinion, and I have freely given it, but many will undoubtedly differ from me. I only speak my genuine feelings." '[1]

Haydon and Wilkie went down on a visit to Coleorton in 1809, of which Haydon gives the following account:—

'There had been a great deal of fun at Lord Mulgrave's about this visit. Sir George, like all men of fashion, had a way of saying pleasant things without the least meaning. He was always full of invitations to Coleorton, and when he disapproved of my rocks in Dentatus, he said, "There are some capital rocks at Coleorton which you and Wilkie must come down and study. I will write to you as soon as I get down." When, on his return to town, he again found fault with the rocks, Lord Mulgrave slily said, "Haydon, what a pity it was you did not see those unfortunate rocks at Coleorton"; and when the picture was up, and Sir George tried to say anything in my defence, Lord Mulgrave would say, "Ah, Sir George, it is all owing to those cursed rocks!"

'Sir George at last, quite ashamed of his wilful forgetfulness, wrote us both a most kind

[1] *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, edited by Tom Taylor, vol. i. pp. 64-67.

invitation while we were in Devonshire; and so, the moment we returned to town, off we set for Coleorton. We got to Ashby-de-la-Zouche at night, slept there, and the next day posted on to Coleorton.

'The house was a small seat, recently built by Dance in the Gothic style, very near a former house where Beaumont and Fletcher used to spend their summers. Sir George, I think, told us he was descended from the same family as the dramatist.

'Both he and Lady Beaumont received us very kindly, but I could not help thinking that it was more to avoid Lord Mulgrave's future quizzing than from any real pleasure in our company. As I was walking with him next day about the grounds, he said, "Now I hope you and Wilkie will stay a fortnight." . . . We passed a fortnight as delightfully as painters could. Sir George painted, and Lady Beaumont drew, and Wilkie and I made our respective studies for our own purposes. At lunch we assembled and chatted over what we had been doing, and at dinner we all brought down our respective sketches, and cut up each other in great good-humour.

'We dined with the Claude and Rembrandt before us, breakfasted with the Rubens landscape,[1]

[1] All now in the National Gallery.

and did nothing, morning, noon, or night, but think of painting, talk of painting, dream of painting, and wake to paint again.

'We lingered on the stairs in going up to bed and studied the effect of candlelight upon each other, wondering how the shadows could be best got as clear as they looked. Sometimes Sir George made Wilkie stand with the light in a proper direction, and he and I studied the colour. Sometimes he held the candle himself, and made Wilkie join me; at another time he would say, "Stop where you are. Come here, Wilkie. Asphaltum thinly glazed over on a cool preparation I *think* would do it," and David and I would suggest something else. We then unwillingly separated for the night, and rose with the lark, to go at it again, all of us feeling as jealous as if we were artists struggling for fame. Wilkie and Sir George had the best of it, because, after all, rocks are inanimate; and seeing that I should be done up if I did not bring out something to sustain my dignity, I resolved on a study of a horse's head. Without saying a word, by dinner next day I painted, full of life and fire, the head of a favourite horse of Sir George's, and bringing it in when the party assembled for dinner, I had the satisfaction of demolishing their little bits of study, for the size of life effectually done is sure to carry off the prize.

'The next morning at breakfast I perceived that something was brewing in David's head, and I clearly saw that my championship would not be a sinecure. Away went David to his studies, I to my rocks, Sir George to his painting-room, and Lady Beaumont to her boudoir. Dinner was announced, and in stalked David Wilkie with an exquisite study of an old woman of the village, in his best style, so that the laurel was divided; but they all allowed that nothing could exceed the eye of my horse.

'One evening I made Lady Beaumont's maid stand on the staircase with a light behind her, so as to cast a good shadow on the wall, and from her I painted an excellent study for Lady Macbeth. Our fortnight was now fast drawing to a close, and Sir George began to lament that when we had left him he should be compelled to attend to his coal-mines.

'In the gardens he had a bust of Wordsworth, and I think a memento of Wilson. Coleorton is a retired spot; I visited it in 1837, when at Leicester, and was touched to see it again after so many years. A group of sculpture had been added near the hall; my Macbeth (of which presently) was on the staircase. Jackson, Lord Mulgrave, Sir George and Lady Beaumont, were all dead, and I walked through the house in a melancholy stupor; angry to see the

rooms, where once hung the *élite* of our now national pictures, filled with modern works, and the two superb heads (by Sir Joshua) of Sir George and Lady Beaumont pushed high up to make way for some commonplace trash.

'Sir George said to us one day at dinner, "Wordsworth may perhaps walk in; if he do, I caution you both against his terrific democratic notions." This was in 1809, and considering the violence of his subsequent conservatism, it is a curious fact to recall.'[1]

1815.—'Sir George Beaumont and I had now made up our differences.[2] He called, and said he must have a picture, and advanced me fifty guineas. I said I hoped he would not wish for anything less than life. He replied, Certainly not, and at a price not to exceed 200 guineas. Sir George's heart was always tender, but he was capricious.

* * * * *

'Before Sir George left town he sent me a letter which I recommend to the youthful student, as I do all his letters, as models of sound advice both on art and conduct.

[1] *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, vol. i. pp. 133-135.

[2] These arose out of a painting of *Macbeth*, which Sir George had commissioned Haydon to execute. They lasted during 1809 and 1810, and are fully narrated in Haydon's Autobiography, but need not be enlarged on here.

'He wrote (July 1, 1815):—

'"As your sincere well-wisher, I earnestly require you to abstain from all writing, except on broad and general subjects, chiefly allusive to your art. If any severe or unjust remarks are made on you or your works, *paint* them down. You can. But if you retort in words, action will produce reaction, and your whole remaining life will be one scene of pernicious contention. Your mind, which should be a mansion for all lovely thoughts, will be for ever disturbed by angry and sarcastic movements, and you will never be in a state to sit down to your easel with that composed dignity which your high calling demands."

'I answered this by assuring him that since my attack on the Royal Academy (in which I shall glory to the day of my death), I had never written a line in attack, nor would I ever again; that I had long been thoroughly convinced that to paint my way to my great object was the only plan.'[1]

1816.—'About this time I had written to Sir George Beaumont for pecuniary assistance. In his reply, after granting me the aid I wanted, he wrote:—

[1] *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, vol. i. pp. 306, 307.

'"Pray excuse me if I again take the opportunity of recommending some profitable mode of practice. I know you object to portraits, although the dignity you would be able to give them, so far from degrading, would greatly add to your reputation; and the greatest artists have not considered the practice as beneath their notice.

'"Again, painting fancy-heads and other smaller works would be a relief from severer studies, and be very likely to answer the purpose.

'"Indeed, my dear sir, you must attend to this necessary concern, or circumstances more mortifying than what I recommend cannot fail to attend you. Recollect how immediately the head of the Gipsy sold!"

'This letter was prophetic; but all my friends were always advising me what to do, instead of advising the Government what to do for me. Now a different course, I have no hesitation in saying, would have prevented my necessities and developed what powers I had.

'Dear Sir George's advice was kind and good, but it was yielding the question of public support; and as I had made up my mind to bring that about by storm, I disdained Sir George's timid caution, and flew at my picture, come what might.'[1]

[1] *Life*, vol. i. pp. 368, 369.

July 25, 1826.—'Lawrence and Sir George Beaumont are the two most perfect gentlemen I ever saw,—both naturally irritable and waspish, but both controlling every feeling which is incompatible with breeding.

'At a large party once at a hotel in Jermyn Street, to breakfast with Sir Walter Scott, Sir George remained a long time with his empty cup waiting for tea. The conversation being lively, he was forgotten by Sir Walter, and I sat watching him to observe how he would bear it. It was quite a study to see how admirably Sir George, by anecdotes, and laughing, and listening, all of which was intentional, kept everybody from believing he was neglected, or thought himself so. At last his cup caught Sir Walter's eye; he filled it, with an apology, and Sir George took it as if he had then only been thirsty, and as if on the whole his tea was a great deal better than if he had had it sooner. It was exquisitely done. Lawrence is not so inherently a gentleman. His air looks like obedience; in Beaumont it was like delicacy.'[1]

In 1827, Haydon wrote of Sir George Beaumont:—

'Sir George was an extraordinary man, one of

[1] *Life*, vol. ii. pp. 148, 149.

the old school formed by Sir Joshua,—a link between the artist and the nobleman, elevating the one by an intimacy which did not depress the other. Born a painter, his fortune prevented the necessity of application for subsistence, and of course he did not apply. His taste was exquisite, not peculiar or classical, but essentially Shakespearian. Painting was his great delight. He talked of nothing else, and would willingly have done nothing else. His ambition was to connect himself with the Art of the country, and he has done it for ever. For though Angerstein's pictures were a great temptation, yet without Sir George Beaumont's offer of his own collection, it is a question if they would have been purchased. He is justly entitled to be considered as the founder of the National Gallery. His great defect was a want of moral courage; what his taste dictated to be right he would shrink from asserting, if it shocked the prejudices of others, or put himself to a moment's inconvenience. With great benevolence he appeared, therefore, often mean; with exquisite taste, he seemed often to judge wrong; and with a great wish to do good, he often did a great deal of harm. He seemed to think that to bring forth unacknowledged talent from obscurity was more meritorious than to support it when acknowledged. The favourite of this year was forgotten the next.

'His loss, with all his faults, will not easily be supplied. He founded the National Gallery. Let him be crowned! Peace to him!'[1]

Haydon's reference to Sir George as the founder of our National Gallery deserves more than a passing notice. In 1824 Angerstein's pictures were bought by the State, and these formed the original nucleus of the collection; but in 1826 Sir George added sixteen of his own pictures, including specimens by Claude, Rembrandt, Rubens, Wilson, and Wilkie; and there is no doubt that it was to his appeals, his tact, and his gifts, that the founding of what is now one of the finest Art Treasuries in the world—our National Gallery in Trafalgar Square—was mainly due.

He died on 7th February 1827, at the age of seventy-three, and was buried in the Church of Coleorton, near the Hall, leaving behind him a sunny memory of goodness and graciousness. Lady Beaumont, to whom many of the letters in the following volumes are addressed, survived

[1] *Life*, vol. ii. pp. 161, 162.

him little more than two years. Of her, Henry Crabb Robinson wrote in his Diary, in March 1823, 'She is a gentlewoman of great sweetness and dignity, I should think amongst the most interesting persons in the country.'

In November 1830 Wordsworth visited Coleorton for a week, and rode thence to Cambridge; composing on the way some elegiac stanzas in memory of his departed friend. From Cambridge he wrote to Sir William Rowan Hamilton at the Dublin Observatory: 'Thirty-seven miles did I ride in one day, through the worst of storms; and what was my recourse? Writing verses to the memory of my departed friend, Sir George Beaumont, whose house I had left the day before.'[1] The following are the opening lines of these *Elegiac Musings in the Grounds of Coleorton Hall*, to which is prefixed the sentence—

> In these grounds stands the Parish Church, wherein is a mural monument bearing an Inscription, which, in deference to the earnest request of the deceased, is

[1] *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, by Archdeacon Graves, vol. i. p. 402.

confined to name, dates, and these words :—'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord !'

With copious eulogy in prose or rhyme
Graven on the tomb we struggle against Time,
Alas, how feebly ! but our feelings rise
And still we struggle when a good man dies;
Such offering BEAUMONT dreaded and forbade,
A spirit meek in self-abasement clad.
Yet *here* at least, though few have numbered days
That shunned so modestly the light of praise,
His graceful manners, and the temperate ray
Of that arch fancy which would round him play,
Brightening a converse never known to swerve
From courtesy and delicate reserve;
That sense, the bland philosophy of life,
Which checked discussion ere it warmed to strife;
Those rare accomplishments, and varied powers,
Might have their record among sylvan bowers.
Oh, fled for ever ! vanished like a blast
That shook the leaves in myriads as it passed ;—
Gone from this world of earth, air, sea, and sky,
From all its spirit-moving imagery,
Intensely studied with a painter's eye,
A poet's heart ; and, for congenial view,
Portrayed with happiest pencil, not untrue
To common recognitions while the line
Flowed in a course of sympathy divine.
Etc. etc. etc.

An extract from a letter of Southey's to Allan

Cunningham, written on June 3, 1833, gives *his* estimate of Sir George's character:—

'*Keswick, June* 3, 1833.

'My dear Allan,— . . . Sir George Beaumont's marriage was in 1774,[1] the year of my birth; he spent that summer here: and Faringdon was with him part of the time, taking up their quarters in the little inn by Lowdore. Hearne, also, was with him here, either that year or soon afterwards, and made for him a sketch of the whole circle of this vale, from a field called Crow Park. Sir George intended to build a circular banqueting-room, and have this painted round the walls. If the execution had not always been procrastinated, here would have been the first panorama. I have seen the sketch, now preserved on a roll more than twenty feet in length.

'Sir George's death was not from any decay. His mother lived some years beyond ninety, and his health had greatly improved during the latter years of his life. He was never better than when last in this country, a very few months before his death. The seizure was sudden: after breakfast, as he was at work upon a picture, he fainted; erysipelas presently

[1] Southey has given the date inaccurately. Sir George was married in 1778.

showed itself upon the head, and soon proved fatal.

'I know that he painted with much more ardour in his old age than at other times of his life, and I believe that his last pictures were his best. In one point I thought him too much of an artist; none of his pictures represented the scene from which he took them; he took the features, and disposed them in the way which pleased him best. Whenever you enter these doors of mine, you shall see a little piece of his (the only one I have), which perfectly illustrates this: the subject is this very house, and scarcely any one object in the picture resembles the reality. His wish was, to give the character, the spirit of the scene. But whoever may look upon this picture hereafter, with any thought of me, will wish it had been a faithful portrait of the place.

'He was one of the happiest men I ever knew, for he enjoyed all the advantages of his station, and entered into none of the follies to which men are so easily tempted by wealth and the want of occupation. His disposition kept him equally from all unworthy and all vexatious pursuits. He had as little liking for country sports, as for public business of any kind, but had a thorough love for art and nature. And if one real affliction or one anxiety ever crossed his path

in any part of his life, I never heard of it. I verily believe that no man ever enjoyed the world more; and few were more humbly, more wisely, more religiously prepared for entering upon another state of existence.

'He became acquainted with Coleridge here, before I came into this country; this led to his friendship with Wordsworth, and to his acquaintance with me (for more than acquaintance it can hardly be called). He has lodged more than once in this house, when it was in an unfinished state: this very room he occupied before the walls were plastered.

'Next to painting and natural scenery, he delighted in theatricals more than in anything else. Few men read so well, and I have heard those who knew him intimately say that he would have made an excellent actor.'[1]

To this may be added an extract from Sir Walter Scott's Diary, February 14, 1827:—

'Sir George Beaumont's dead; by far the most sensible and pleasing man I ever knew, kind, too, in his nature, and generous—gentle in society, and of those mild manners which tend to soften the causticity of the general London

[1] *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, edited by the Rev. Charles Cuthbert Southey, vol. vi. pp. 215-217.

tone of persiflage and personal satire. As an amateur painter he was of the very highest distinction; and though I know nothing of the matter, yet I should hold him a perfect critic in painting, for he always made his criticisms intelligible, and used no slang. I am very sorry —as much as it is in my nature to be—for one whom I could see but seldom.'[1]

Scott's opening sentence suggests a remark by Sir Humphry Davy, also a friend of the Beaumonts:—

'Sir George is a remarkably *sensible* man, which I mention because it *is* somewhat remarkable in a painter of genius, who is at the same time a man of rank, and an exceedingly amusing companion.'[2]

It would be out of place to make any comment in this Preface upon the Letters themselves, which follow. It was at first intended to arrange them in five sections, under the names of their respective writers, but in order to give variety to the story they tell, and to avoid traversing the

[1] Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. ix. pp. 89-90.
[2] *Fragmentary Remains of Sir Humphry Davy*, p. 96.

same ground more than once, it was afterwards resolved to print them in chronological order, as a continuous narrative. Several things in them will have the interest of novelty to most readers; and I cannot think that their publication in this form will anticipate the interest of forthcoming works on some of the writers and their friends, such as Mr. Ernest Coleridge's Life of his grandfather, Samuel Taylor Coleridge—which, from the store of new material it must contain, will be universally looked for with the keenest interest,—Mrs. Sandford's Life of Thomas Poole of Nether Stowey, or my own Life of Wordsworth. I believe the publication of these Letters will serve their own purpose, of perpetuating the 'Memorials of Coleorton,' and will only quicken the interest of appreciative readers in any larger works that follow.

WILLIAM KNIGHT.

LETTERS.

COLEORTON LETTERS.

Coleridge to Sir George and Lady Beaumont.

Greta Hall, Keswick, Friday, Aug. 12, 1803.

Dear Sir George and Lady Beaumont,—I returned, an hour and a half after your departure, with Hartley and Derwent, and with Wordsworth, his wife, sister, and the baby.

* * * * *

There is a something in all the good and deep emotions of our nature, that would ever prevent me from purposely *getting out of the way* of them —it was painful to me to anticipate that you would be gone, painful to find that you were gone; and I only *endeavoured* to satisfy myself with the thought, that it would have been more painful to have taken leave of you. It will give a lasting interest to the Drawing of the Waterfall, that I first saw it through tears. I was

indeed unwell, and sadly nervous; and I must not be ashamed to confess to you, my honoured friends, that I found a bodily relief in weeping, and yielded to it. On Tuesday evening Mr. R——, the author of 'The . . . of . . .,' drank tea and spent the evening with us at Grasmere—and this had produced a very unpleasant effect on my spirits. Wordsworth's mind and body are both of a stronger texture than mine, and he has passions, that have made their Pandemonium in the crazy hovel of that poor man's heart—but I was downright melancholy at the sight. If to be a poet or a man of genius entailed on us the necessity of housing such company in our bosoms, I would pray the very flesh off my knees to have a head as dark and unfurnished as Wordsworth's old Molly[1] has, if only I might have a heart as careless and as loving. But God be praised! these unhappy beings are neither poets nor men of sense. Enough of them! Forgive me, dear Sir George, but I could not help being pleased that the man disliked you, and your Lady, and he lost no time in letting us know it. If I believed it possible that the man liked me, upon my soul I should feel

exactly as if I were tarred and feathered. I have a *cowardly* dread of being hated even by bad men; but in this instance disgust comes in to my assistance, and the greater dread of being called Friend. I do seriously believe that the chief cause of Wordsworth's and Southey's having been classed with me, as a *school*, originates entirely in our not hating or envying each other. It is so unusual that three professed Poets, in every respect unlike each other, should nevertheless take pleasure in each other's welfare and reputation. What a refreshment of heart did I not find last night in Cowper's Letters! Their very defects suited me. Had they been of a higher class, as exhibitions of intellect, they would have less satisfied the then craving of my mind. I had taken up the book merely as connected with you; and had I hunted through all the Libraries of Oxford and Cambridge I should have found no one that would have been so delightful on its own account.

The Wordsworths are gone to Applethwaite with Mrs. Coleridge. It would be no easy matter to say how much they were delighted with the two Drawings—as two poems; how much affected by them, as marks of your kindness

and attention. O dear Sir George, indeed, indeed my heart is very full toward you and Lady Beaumont; it is a very mixed feeling, and gratitude expresses but a small part of it.

Poor little Derwent has been in such a crowd, that he did not seem to know that you were gone, till this afternoon, when we two had the house to ourselves. Then he went to your room, and he has been crying piteously, 'Lady Beaumont's gone away, and I WILL be a naughty boy; Lady Beaumont's gone away.' He is a very affectionate little fellow.

If my health permit, we are to commence our tour on Monday, but this is very uncertain. I have now no doubt that my complaint is *atonic gout;* and though the excitement and exercise which the journey will afford would be of service to me, yet the chance of rainy weather and damp beds is a very serious business. I am rather better this evening; but I incline still to go to Malta with Stoddart, or to Madeira—which I can do at the same expense as I can make the Scotch tour. I shall settle this in the course of to-morrow, and by to-morrow's night post shall send you a large coarse sheet, containing the Leech-Gatherer, which Miss Wordsworth

has copied out, and such of my own verses as appeared to please you. I have written a strange rambling letter—for in truth I have written under a sort of perplexity of moral feeling,—my head prompting respect, my heart confident affectionateness; the one tells me it is my first letter to you, the other lets me know that unless I write to you as old friends I cannot write to you at all. Be so good therefore as with your wonted kindness to think of this letter as of a sort of awkward *bow* on entering a room. I shall find myself more at my ease when I have sat down. Believe me, I write everyday words with no everyday feeling, when I subscribe myself, dear Sir George, and dear Lady Beaumont, with affectionate esteem, your obliged and grateful S. T. COLERIDGE.

[1] His servant.—ED.

Coleridge to Sir George and Lady Beaumont.

Greta Hall, Keswick, Sept. 22, 1803.

My dear Sir George and dear Lady Beaumont, —I reached my home this day week. Need I say that I have been ill, or that I should have written immediately? The attacks of the gout, now no longer doubtful, have become formidable in the stomach, and my nature is making continual, though hitherto, alas! fruitless efforts to throw the disease into the extremities; and, as it never rains but it pours, I have an intermittent fever, with severe hemicrania, which returns every evening at half-past five, and has hitherto baffled the use of bark. Yet I am strong, and have far better appetite than usual, and never in my life *looked* so well, which is owing in part to the *tan* from sun, wind, and rain.

At Perth I received two letters from Southey, the first informing me of his approaching loss, the second of his arrival at Keswick. I altered my plans immediately—took my place in the mail, and hastened home to yield him what small

comfort my society might afford. Previously to my taking the coach, I had walked 263 miles in eight days, in the hope of forcing the disease into the extremities—and so strong am I, that I would undertake at this present time to walk 50 miles a day for a week together. In short, while I am in possession of my will and my reason, I can keep the fiend at arm's length; but with the night my horrors commence. During the whole of my journey three nights out of four I have fallen asleep struggling and resolving to lie awake, and awaking have blest the scream which delivered me from the reluctant sleep. Nine years ago I had three months' visitation of this kind, and I was cured by a sudden throwing off of a burning corrosive acid. These dreams, with all their mockery of guilt, rage, unworthy desires, remorse, shame, and terror, formed at that time the subject of some Verses, which I had forgotten till the return of the complaint, and which I will send you in my next as a curiosity. But God be praised! though it be hard to bear up, I do bear up, in the deep faith that all things work together for good to him who in the simplicity of his heart desires good. To-morrow I expect to receive the new

gout medicine from Welles, who in consequence of a request from my friend Dr. Beddoes, has written me a very obliging letter. If he cure me, I will raise up a new sect in his honour, and make a greater clamour *in his favour* as the Antipodagra, "that was to come, and is already in the world," than even the Puritans did *against* the poor Pope, as the Antichrist.

I left Wordsworth and his sister at Loch Lomond. I was so ill that I felt myself a burthen on them, and the exercise was too much for me, and yet not enough. I sent my clothes, etc., forward to Edinburgh, and walked myself to Glencoe, and so on as far as Cullen, then back again to Inverness, and thence over that most desolate and houseless country by Aviemore, Dalnacardoch, Dalwhinny, Tummel Bridge, Kenmore, to Perth, with various digressions and mountain climbings. At the Bridge of the Sark, which divides England from Scotland, I determined to write to you. At the foot of Loch Ketterin, under the agitation of delight produced by the Trossachs, I began a letter to you, but my fits became so violent and alarming that I was truly incapable of doing more than taking a few notes in my pocket-book. At Fort William, on entering the public-

house I fell down in an hysterical fit, with long and loud weeping, to my own great metaphysical amusement, and the unutterable consternation and *beboozlement* of the landlord, his wife, children, and servants, who all gabbled Gaelic to each other, and sputtered out short-winded English to me in a strange style. So much 'all about myself.' I will send you my whole tour in the course of the ensuing fortnight, in two or three successive letters. Wordsworths will be home, *Deo volente*, on Saturday. Poor Mrs. Southey droops, but not so much as I expected: and I suspect and hope that the best consolation is about to be given them. Southey, who is a very amiable man, and very much improved in every respect, bears it well. It is a loss which will never leave his memory, nor master his fortitude and resignation.

My dear and honoured friends, my spirit has been with you day after day. Yesterday after noon I found among Southey's books a tetraglott edition of Pascal's Provincial Letters. I seized it, O how eagerly! It seemed to me as if I saw Lady Beaumont with my very eyes, and heard over again the very sounds of these words, in which she had expressed her enthusiastic

admiration of him. Though but a wretched French scholar, I did not go to bed before I had read the Preface and the two first Letters. They are not only excellent, but the excellence is altogether of a new kind to me. Wit, irony, humour, sarcasm, scholastic subtlety, and profound metaphysics all combined—and this strange combination still more strangely co-existing with childlike simplicity, innocence, unaffected charity, and the very soul of Christian humility. And the style is a robe of pure light.

We have Mr. Clarkson here, so that we have a houseful, and my wife is chin-deep in occupation with the children and the meals—for we have but one servant, and can procure no other till November. She will however write to Lady B. in answer to her kind letter of to-day, as speedily as possible. I send with this a sheet full of verses, that I had promised. Your kindness, my dear Sir G., will make you think them almost worth the postage. In a few weeks I shall, if I live and am tolerably well, send you three specimens of my *Translations* from your Drawings. If you should really like them, I will go on and make a volume. I cannot help saying, and it seems as if I had more love toward you

than toward myself in my heart while I am saying it, that I myself have been unusually pleased with what I have done.—My honoured friends! with unaffected esteem, gratitude, and affectionate admiration, ever yours,

S. T. C.

Coleridge to Sir George and Lady Beaumont.

Keswick, Oct. 1, 1803, 11 *o'clock.*

My dear and honoured Friends,—I received your kind letter this afternoon, and yet have but this moment read it. I have been fighting up against so severe a tooth and face ache. Every morning since my last, I have risen calculating on the pleasure—and indeed it is a very great one—of writing a long letter to you; but what with the disease, and what with the medicine, I have been unable to do anything but read in silence, or listen to my friends' recitations. Mr. Edmondson has no doubt that I have gout, but very serious doubts whether my worst sufferings do not originate in an affection of the mesenteric glands. However, I shall give a fair trial to this new gout medicine.

* * * * *

O dear Sir George! you bid one 'above all things abstain from reading at night.' Believe me, nine times out of ten I have transgressed in this way, only from the *dread* of falling asleep;

and I contracted the habit from awaking in terrors about an hour after I had fallen asleep, and from the being literally afraid to trust myself again out of the leading-strings of my will and reason. So I have lit my candle, stirred up my fire, and studied till daylight. I fear, I fear, that a hot climate is my only medicine; and it seems better to die than to live out of England. I have been extremely affected by the death of young Emmett—just 24! At that age, dear Sir George, I was retiring from politics, disgusted beyond measure by the manners and morals of the Democrats, and fully awake to the inconsistency of my practice with my speculative principles. 'My speculative principles were wild as dreams.' They were 'dreams linked to purposes of reason'; but they were perfectly harmless,—a compound of Philosophy and Christianity. They were Christian—for they demanded the direct reformation and voluntary act of each individual person to any change in his outward circumstances; and my whole plan of Revolution was confined to an experiment with a dozen families in the wilds of America. They were philosophical—because I contemplated a possible consequent amelioration of the human race in

its present state, and in this world; yet Christian still, because I regarded this earthly amelioration as important chiefly for its effects on the future state of the race of man so ameliorated. Dear good Mrs. Carter thought wisely and accurately as well as charitably. For what is the nature of the beauty of youth? Is it not this—to know what is right in the abstract, by a living feeling, by an intuition of the uncorrupted heart? to body forth this abstract right in beautiful forms? and lastly, to project the phantom-world into the world of reality, like a catoptrical mirror? Say rather, to make ideas and realities stand side by side, the one as vivid as the other; even as I have often seen in a natural well of translucent water the *reflections* of the lank weeds that hung down from its sides standing upright and like Substances among the substantial water-plants that were growing on the bottom; and thus far all was well—the mists of the dawn of Reason coloured by the rich clouds that precede the rising sun. But my relations, and the Churchmen and 'Aristocrats'—to use the phrase of the day—these too conceited my phantoms to be substances, only what I beheld as Angels they saw as Devils; and, though they never ceased to talk

of my youth as a proof of the falsehood of my opinions, they never introduced it as an extenuation of the error. My *opinions* were the drivel of a babe, but the guilt attached to them, this was the grey hair and rigid muscle of inveterate depravity. To such bigotry what was an enthusiastic young man likely to oppose? They abhorred my person, I abhorred their actions; they set up the long howl of hydrophoby at my principles, and I repaid their hatred and terror by the bitterness of contempt. Who then remained to listen to me? to be kind to me? to be my friends? to look at me with kindness, to shake my hand with kindness? to open the door, and spread the hospitable board, and to let me feel that I was a man well-beloved?—me, who from my childhood have had no avarice, no ambition, whose very vanity in my vainest moments was nine-tenths of it the desire, and delight, and necessity of loving, and of being beloved? These offices of love the Democrats only performed to me; my own family, bigots from ignorance, remained wilfully ignorant from bigotry. What wonder then if in the heat of grateful affection, and the unguarded desire of sympathising with those who so kindly sympa-

thised with me, I too often deviated from my own principles? and though I detested Revolutions in my calmer moments, as attempts, that were necessarily baffled and made blood-horrible by the very causes which could alone justify Revolutions (I mean the ignorance, superstition, profligacy, and vindictive passions, which are the natural effects of despotism and false religion)—and though even to extravagance I always supported the doctrine of absolute unequivocal non-resistance—yet with an ebullient fancy, a flowing utterance, a light and dancing heart, and a disposition to catch time by the very rapidity of my own motion, and to speak vehemently from mere verbal associations, choosing sentences and sentiments for the very reason that would have made me recoil with a dying away of the heart and an unutterable horror from the actions expressed in such sentences and sentiments—namely, because they were wild and original, and vehement and fantastic, I aided the Jacobins, by witty sarcasms and subtle reasoning, and declarations full of genuine feeling against all rulers and against all established forms! Speaking in public at Bristol I adverted to a public supper which had been given by Lord ——, I forget his name, in honour

of a victory gained by the Austrians; and, after a turbid stream of wild eloquence, I said, 'This is a true Lord's Supper in the communion of darkness! This is a Eucharist of Hell! a sacrament of misery! over each morsel and each drop of which the spirit of some murdered innocent cries aloud to God, This is my body! and this is my Blood!' These words form, alas! a faithful specimen of too many of my declamations at that time, and, fortunately for me, the Government, I suppose, knew that both Southey and I were utterly unconnected with any party, or club, or society; and this praise I must take to myself, that I disclaimed all these societies, these *imperia in imperio*, these ascarides in the bowels of the State, subsisting on the weakness and diseasedness, and having for their final object the death of that State, whose life had been their birth and growth, and continued to be their sole nourishment. All such societies, under whatever name, I abhorred as wicked conspiracies; and to this principle I adhered immoveably, simply because it was a principle, and this at a time when the danger attached to the opposite mode of conduct would have been the most seducing temptation to it; at a time when, in

rejecting these secret associations, often as I was urged to become a member, now of this, and now of that, I felt just as a religious young officer may be supposed to feel, who, full of courage, dares refuse a challenge, and, considered as a coward by those around him, often shuts his eyes, and anticipates the moment when he might leap on the wall, and stand in the breach, the first and the only one. This insulation of myself and Southey I suppose the Ministers knew—knew that we were boys, or rather, perhaps, Southey was at Lisbon, and I at Stowey, sick of politics, and sick of democrats and democracy, before the Ministers had ever heard of us: for our career of sedition, our obedience and sympathy and pride of talent in opposition to our own, certainly to *my own* uniform principles, lasted but ten months. Yet, if in that time I had been imprisoned, as in the rigour of the law I doubt not I might have been fifty times—for the very clank of the chains that were to be put about my limbs would not at that time have deterred me from a strong phrase or striking metaphor, although I had had no other inducement to the use of the same, except the wantonness of luxuriant imagination, and

my aversion to abstain from anything simply because it was dangerous—yet, if in that time I had been imprisoned, my health and constitution were such as that it would have been almost as certain death to me as the executioner has been to poor young Emmett. Like him, I was very young, very enthusiastic, distinguished by talents and requirements, and a sort of morbid eloquence; like him, I was a zealous partisan of Christianity, and despiser and abhorrer of French philosophy and French morals; like him, I would have given my body to be burned inch by inch rather than that a French army should have insulted my native shores; and alas! alas! like him, I was unconsciously, yet actively, aiding and abetting the plans that I abhorred, and the men who were more, far more unlike me in every respect, in education, habits, principles, and feelings, than the most anathematised aristocrat among my opponents. Alas! alas! unlike *me*, he did not awake. The country in which he lived furnished far more plausible arguments for his active zeal than England could do. The vices of the party with whom he acted were so palpably the effect of darkest ignorance and foulest oppression that they could not dis-

gust him; the worse the vices, and the more he abhorred them, the more he loved the men themselves, abstracting the men from their vices, the vices from the men, and transferring them, with tenfold guilt, to the state of society, and to the Orange faction, holding together that state of society, which he believed to be the cause of these vices. Ah, woe is me! and in this mood the poor young enthusiast sent forth that unjustifiable proclamation, one sentence of which clearly permitted unlimited assassination; the only sentence, beyond all doubt, which Emmett would gladly have blotted out with his heart's blood, and of which, at the time he wrote it, he could not have seen the import, and the only sentence which was fully realised in action. This moment it was a few unweighed words of an impassioned visionary; in the next moment it became the foul murder of Lord Kilwarden. O my heart, give praise, give praise! not that I was preserved from bonds, or ignominy, or death, but that I was preserved from crimes that it is almost impossible not to call guilt. And poor young Emmett! O, if our Ministers had saved him, had taken his oath and word of honour to have remained in America or some of our colonies

for the next ten years of his life, we *might* have had in him a sublimely great man; we assuredly should have had in him a good man, and heart and soul *an Englishman*. Think of Lord Mansfield! About the age of poor Emmett, he drank the Pretender's health on his knees, and was obnoxious to all the pains and penalties of high treason. And where lies the difference between the two? Murray's plot had for its object a foul slavery under the name of loyalty; Emmett's as foul a slavery under the name of liberty and independence. But whatever the Ministers may have done, Heaven dealt kindly with the young man. He has died firm, and in the height and heat of his spirit, beholding in his partisans only the wickedly oppressed, in his enemies the wicked oppressors. O, if his mad, mad enterprise had succeeded! then most mistaken and bewildered young man, if other punishment than the death thou hast suffered be needful for thy deadly error, what better punishment, what fitter purgatory, can be imagined, than a vision presented to thee, and conceived as real—a vision of all the massacres, the previous passions, the blasphemies, sensualities, superstitions, and the bloody persecutions, and mutual cannibalism of

atheist and Papist that would have rushed in, like a torrent of sulphur and burning chaos, at the breach which thou thyself hadst made—till thou, yea, even thou thyself, hadst called out in agony to the merciless Gaul, and invoked any army of slave fiends to crush the more enormous evil of a mob of fiends in anarchy? My honoured friends, as I live, I scarcely know what I have been writing; but the very circumstance of writing to *you*, added to the recollection of the unwise and unchristian feelings with which, at poor Emmett's age, *I* contemplated all persons of *your* rank in society, and that recollection confronted with my present feelings towards you, it has agitated me, dear friends, and I have written, my heart at a full gallop, down hill. And now good-night; I will finish this letter to-morrow morning. The moon is in the very height and 'keystone' of the sky, and all the mountains through the whole vale are in consequence things of the earth. A few hours ago, when the moon was rising from behind Latterig, and when the clouds on Causa and Grisedale Pikes, opposite my study window, caught its 'light,' then all the mountains belonged to the sky. No one who has not suffered what I suffer

in my sleep can conceive the depth and fervour with which I wish that you may be asleep, dreamless, or with such dreams as leave no other trace behind them but the dim recollection that you had been dreaming.—*Sunday morning, 1 o'clock.*

Sunday, Noon.—I was much affected by the beautiful passage which Lady Beaumont was so good as to extract from her sister's letter. I would that she and you two were all here even now, and looking out from my study window. Great indeed is the charm which yearning memory gives to the forms of things. The *present* would plead its cause most eloquently from Skiddaw (Swinside), rich with all the hues of decaying fern, the colour of the unripe lime, of the ripe lemon, of the bright orange even to the depth of dried orange-peel; and when the whole shall have become of this last colour, then the decaying birches will have put on the very same lovely lemon colour which the ferns have in their middle stage of decay. How kind Nature is to us! Where decay is pernicious, she renders it offensive, as in all animal substances; but where it is innocuous, she makes it rival the spring-tide

growth in beauty. I use the word 'Nature' partly to avoid the too frequent use of a more awful name, and partly to indulge the sense of the *motherliness* of general providence, when the heart is not strong enough to lift itself up to a distinct contemplation of the Father of all things.

It gives me sincere pleasure that my Ode has pleased you; somehow or other I hope to finish it. I have sent Lady Beaumont the poems entitled Chamouny, the Inscription for the Fountain, and Tranquillity. Of the poems on your sketches, dear Sir George, I hope thus much, that they will give evidence that the drawings acted upon my mind as Nature does, in its after-workings—they have mingled with my thoughts and furnished forms to my feelings. Southey seems very happy at present. His eyes plague him; but he is a hard task-master to them. He is the most industrious man I know, or have ever known. His present occupations are, the recomposition of his Madoc, an epic poem, and his great History of Portugal, of which he has written considerably more than a quarto volume. We have not heard of or from Hazlitt. He is at Manchester, we suppose, and

has both portraits with him. The children are all well, and Derwent is a cube of fat. Little Sara must be on the brink of teething; she is nine months old, and has no signs of a tooth; the next two months will probably be a hard time for her. The pain and dangerous diseases incident to teething I have ever regarded as the most anomalous of the dispensations of Nature, and their final cause the most obscure. Bless me, what a letter! I am almost ashamed to send it—unless I might dare to say with St. Augustine, Ep. 72, a *tedious* length: 'sed non apud te, cui nulla est pagina gratia[1] quam quae me loquaciorem apportat tibi.'—I remain, my honoured friends, with grateful and affectionate esteem, yours ever and truly,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[1] gratior?

MONT BLANC, THE SUMMIT OF THE VALE OF CHAMOUNY, AN HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE—A HYMN.

[*As sent to Sir George Beaumont.*]

HAST thou a charm to stay the morning star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald awful top, O Chamouny!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, dread mountain form!
Risest from out thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee, and above,
Deep is the sky and black! transpicuous, black,
An ebon mass! Methinks thou piercest it
As with a wedge!
But when I look again,
It is thy own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent form! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to my bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought—entranced in prayer,
I worshipp'd the Invisible alone.

Yet thou, meantime, wast working on my soul,
Even like some deep enchanting melody.
So sweet, we know not we are list'ning to it.
Now I awake! and with a busier mind
And active will self-conscious, offer now,
Not, as before, involuntary prayer
And passive adoration!
Hand and voice,
Awake, awake! And thou, my heart, awake!
Green fields and icy cliffs, all join my hymn!
And thou, thou silent mountain, lone and bare!
O struggling with the darkness all the night,[1]
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky, or when they sink:
Companion of the morning star at dawn,
Thyself earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald—wake, oh wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in earth?
Who fill'd thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee father of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents, fiercely glad!
Who call'd you forth from night and utter death,
From darkness let you loose and icy dens,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shatter'd, and the same for ever?

Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Eternal thunder, and unceasing foam?
And who commanded [and the silence came],
Here shall your billows stiffen and have rest?

Ye ice falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines steeply slope,[2]
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice
And stopp'd at once amid their maddest plunge,
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious, as the gates of heaven,
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who with lovely flowers[3]
Of living blue spread garlands at your feet?
Ye azure flowers, that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild-goats bounding by the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element—
Utter forth, God! and fill the hills with praise!

And thou, thou silent mountain, lone and bare!
Whom as I lift again my head, bow'd low
In adoration, I again behold!

And from thy summit upward to thy base
Sweep slowly with dim eyes suffused with tears!
Rise, mighty form! even as thou *seem'st* to rise!
Rise, like a cloud of incense, from the earth!
Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from earth to heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent stars,
Tell the blue sky, and tell the rising sun,
Earth with her thousand voices calls on God!

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[1] I had written a much finer line when Sca' Fell was in my thoughts, viz.—

O blacker than the darkness all the night,
And visited, etc.

[2] *A bad line;* but I hope to be able to alter it.

[3] The *Gentiana major* grows in large companies a stride's distance from the foot of several of the glaciers. Its *blue* flower, the colour of Hope: is it not a pretty emblem of Hope creeping onward even to the edge of the grave, to the very verge of utter desolation?

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, 14th October 1803.

Dear Sir George,—If any person were to be nformed of the particulars of your kindness to me,—if it were described to him in all its delicacy and nobleness,—and he should afterwards be told that I suffered eight weeks to elapse without writing to you one word of thanks or acknowledgment, he would deem it a thing absolutely *impossible.* It is nevertheless true. This is, in fact, the first time that I have taken up a pen, not for writing letters, but on any account whatsoever, except once, since Mr. Coleridge showed me the writings of the Applethwaite Estate, and told me the little history of what you had done for me, the motives, etc. I need not say that it gave me the most heartfelt pleasure, not for my own sake chiefly, though in that point of view it might well be

most highly interesting to me, but as an act which, considered in all its relations as to matter and manner, it would not be too much to say, did honour to human nature; at least, I felt it as such, and it overpowered me.

Owing to a set of painful and uneasy sensations which I have, more or less, at all times about my chest—from a disease which chiefly affects my nerves and digestive organs—and which makes my aversion from writing little less than madness, I deferred writing to you, being at first made still more uncomfortable by travelling, and loathing to do violence to myself, in what ought to be an act of pure pleasure and enjoyment, viz., the expression of my deep sense of your goodness. This feeling was, indeed, so strong in me, as to make me look upon the act of writing to you, not as the work of a moment, but as a business with something little less than awful in it, a task, a duty, a thing not to be done but in my best, my purest, and my happiest moments. Many of these I had, but then I had not my pen and ink and my paper before me, my conveniences, 'my appliances and means to boot'; all which, the moment that I thought of them, seemed to disturb and impair the sanctity

of my pleasure. I contented myself with thinking over my complacent feelings, and breathing forth solitary gratulations and thanksgivings, which I did in many a sweet and many a wild place, during my late Tour. In this shape, procrastination became irresistible to me; at last I said, I will write at home from my own fireside, when I shall be at ease and in comfort. I have now been more than a fortnight at home, but the uneasiness in my chest has made me beat off the time when the pen was to be taken up. I do not know from what cause it is, but during the last three years I have never had a pen in my hand for five minutes, before my whole frame becomes one bundle of uneasiness; a perspiration starts out all over me, and my chest is oppressed n a manner which I cannot describe. This is a sad weakness; for I am sure, though it is chiefly owing to the state of my body, that by exertion of mind I might in part control it. So, however, it is; and I mention it, because I am sure when you are made acquainted with the circumstances, though the extent to which it exists nobody can well conceive, you will look leniently upon my silence, and rather pity than blame me; though I must still continue to reproach myself, as I

have done bitterly every day for these last eight weeks. One thing in particular has given me great uneasiness: it is, lest in the extreme delicacy of your mind, which is well known to me, you for a moment may have been perplexed by a single apprehension that there might be any error, anything which I might misconceive, in your kindness to me. When I think of the possibility of this, I am vexed beyond measure that I had not resolution to write immediately. But I hope that these fears are all groundless, and that you have (as I know your nature will lead you to do) suspended your judgment upon my silence; blaming me indeed, but in that qualified way in which a good man blames what he believes will be found an act of venial infirmity, when it is fully explained. But I have troubled you far too much with this. Such I am however, and deeply I regret that I am such. I shall conclude with solemnly assuring you, late as it is, that nothing can wear out of my heart, as long as my faculties remain, the deep feeling which I have of your delicate and noble conduct towards me.

It is now high time to speak of the estate,

and what is to be done with it. It is a most delightful situation, and few things would give me greater pleasure than to realise the plan which you had in view for me, of building a house there. But I am afraid, I am sorry to say, that the chances are very much against this, partly on account of the state of my own affairs, and still more from the improbability of Mr. Coleridge's continuing in the country. The writings are at present in my possession, and what I should wish is, that I might be considered at present as steward of the land, with liberty to lay out the rent in planting, or any other improvement which might be thought advisable, with a view to building upon it. And if it should be out of my power to pitch my own tent there, I would then request that you would give me leave to restore the property to your own hands; in order that you might have the opportunity of again presenting it to some worthy person, who might be so fortunate as to be able to make that pleasant use of it, which it was your wish that I should have done.

Mr. Coleridge informed me, that immediately after you left Keswick, he had, as I requested, returned you thanks for those two elegant draw-

ings, which you were so good as to leave for me. The present is valuable in itself, and I consider it as a high honour conferred on me. How often did we wish for five minutes' command of your pencil while we were in Scotland! or rather that you had been with us. Sometimes I am sure you would have been highly delighted. In one thing Scotland is superior to every country I have travelled in; I mean the graceful beauty of the dresses and figures. There is a tone of imagination about them beyond anything I have seen elsewhere.

Mr. Coleridge, I understand, has written to you several times lately; so of course he will have told you when and why he left us. I am glad he did, as I am sure the solitary part of his tour did him much the most service. He is still unwell, though wonderfully strong. He is attempting to bring on a fit of the gout, which he is sure will relieve him greatly. I was at Keswick last Sunday, and saw both him and Mr. Southey, whom I liked very much. Coleridge looks better, I think, than when you saw him; and is, I also think, upon the whole, much better. Lady Beaumont will be pleased to hear that our carriage, though it did not suit Mr. Coleridge,

(the noise of it being particularly unpleasant to him) answered wonderfully well for my sister and me, and that the whole tour far surpassed our most sanguine expectations.

They are sadly remiss at Keswick in putting themselves to trouble in defence of the country; they came forward very cheerfully some time ago, but were so thwarted by the orders and counter-orders of the Ministry and their servants, that they have thrown up the whole in disgust. At Grasmere, we have turned out almost to a man. We are to go to Ambleside on Sunday to be mustered, and put on, for the first time, our military apparel.—I remain, dear Sir George, with the most affectionate and respectful regard for you and Lady Beaumont, yours sincerely,

W. Wordsworth.

My sister will transcribe three sonnets,[1] which I do not send you from any notion I have of their merit, but merely because they are the only verses I have written since I had the pleasure of seeing you and Lady Beaumont. At the sight of Kilchurn Castle, an ancient residence of the Breadalbanes, upon an island in Loch Awe, I felt a real poetical impulse: but I did not pro-

ceed. I began a poem (apostrophising the castle) thus:

> Child of loud-throated war! the mountain stream
> Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
> Is come, and thou art silent in thine age;

but I stopped.

[1] *Written at Neidpath* (near Peebles), a mansion of the Duke of Queensberry: 'Now as I live, I pity that great Lord,' etc. *To the Men of Kent:* 'Vanguard of Liberty, ye Men of Kent!' *Anticipation:* 'Shout, for a mighty victory is won!' etc. If you think, either you or Lady Beaumont, that these two last sonnets are worth publication, would you have the goodness to circulate them in any way you like?

Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont.

No. 16 *Abingdon Street, Westminster,*
Jan. 30th, 1804.

Dear Sir George,—I could not endure to write to you, if in the permitting your letters to remain unanswered, I could attribute to myself any considerable portion of blame. Some divines have held that, with God, to create and to think are one and the same act. If to compose letters, and to write them, had been the same thing to me, you and dear Lady Beaumont would have each received a volume. Indeed, I scarcely dare affront my own nature by a direct apology, as I am conscious that for the last three months I have thought more of you, and relatively to you, than of any other person in the world, with the exception of Mr. T. Wedgwood, the state of whose health and spirits has had, perhaps, some share in my own most miserable condition of body. I am heart-sick and almost stomach-sick of speaking, writing, and thinking

about myself. It is enough that I have been very, very ill, and have no chance of any succession of healthy days while I remain in this climate. Three physicians of eminence whom I have consulted separately, and two of whom are personally attached to me, have given it as their opinion, that a single winter passed in a warm, even, and genial climate, will entirely restore me, not perhaps to robust health, but to that which alone I pray for, the power of exerting perseverantly and continuously those faculties and acquirements which the Almighty has intrusted to my keeping. That this opinion is just, I have a persuasion strong as the life within me; for a single hour of dry frosty weather, or of dry air in summer heat, *fills* me with elastic health, so that no one sensation reminds me that I have been, or am again to be, ill and bedridden. One fact will explain the nature of my complaint. About Friday midnight the weather changed to wind and rain. It affected me in my sleep, and I awoke with a slight shock in my stomach. All Saturday morning, the bad weather continuing, I was unable to breathe, except as one in an asthma breathes, and unable to sit at the writing-desk

for three minutes together. About one o'clock I received a letter of tremendous gloom from T. Wedgwood. As usual, I read it without much conscious emotion; and somebody coming in, I talked on general subjects with ease, and had no suspicion that the letter had *gotten* into me. I went out to dinner and had not tasted three morsels, before a perspiration broke out upon me like a tropical rain, and in about an hour I was quite well. In short, any harassing thought instantly affects my stomach, and any ungenial action upon the skin does the same; and when these unite, the effect is a fearful one. Oftentimes when I have heard of or witnessed any calamity, my whole frame has gone *crash*, as it were, at the very moment that I have been accusing myself of insensibility. My consciousness seems a faculty exclusively devoted to love and pleasure and general thought; and grief and trouble link themselves on to those parts of my being, which, in the blood and other secretions, are no parts of my knowledge.

I left home on the 20th of December, meaning to spend one day at Grasmere, and thence to Kendal. At Grasmere I was taken ill, and

literally imprisoned for more than a month. At length, however, I have reached London, with the resolution of going either to Madeira, or to Catania in Sicily, if I can by any proper way arrange the means of so doing, without injury or distress to Mrs. Coleridge; and of this I have now little doubt. Wordsworth, after an obstinate refusal on my part for more than four months, has at length, I may almost say, *forced* me to accept the loan of £100; and to-morrow, after an interview with some merchants, from whom I am to receive all sort of distinct information, I write to my brothers, and request another £100, which they are well able to spare, without even feeling the loss—even if I should be deluded in my expectations of health, and unable to repay the sums—and this is fully equal to all my want both for the voyage thither and back, my expenses there for a year, and the leaving Mrs. C. perfectly clear of all little debts, etc., with my whole annuity. Such are my plans. That I write thus to you, you know enough of me, dear Sir George, to consider as a certain proof how much and with what affectionate esteem my heart is attached to you. I antici-

pate exceeding comfort in becoming a regular correspondent; and henceforward you may *rely* on me that I shall be so, if I find and feel that my letters will be that comfort and pleasure to you which yours have been and ever will be to me. But as I cannot endure to make up letters of mere thoughts and generalisations, without hearing anything directly and absolutely of and concerning you and dear Lady Beaumont, and without telling you anything of my own self, however near my heart, I have prevailed on myself to write you what I am doing and how my affairs are situated. Now that all is settled, and I no longer risk that from your overflowing kindness which would at once put a stop to my ever writing minutely of myself hereafter; whereas it is among my wishes to write my whole life to you, including . . . in a series of letters.—With grateful love and . . . esteem, my honoured friends, I remain, yours . . .

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S.—Of my poetry, etc., I write you, without fail, the day after to-morrow. I stay in these rooms (an absent acquaintance's lodgings) for eight or nine days.

Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont.

Wednesday, Feb. 1st, 1804.

Dear Sir George,—I thank you for your kindness, and I hope, with no everyday thanks; yet, if I know my own nature, twenty times an hundred pound would not be as precious to me, as that (not unaffectionate) esteem for me on your part, which I flatter myself was the true parent of your kindness. That I do not dare avail myself of your offer becomes therefore a mere trifle; for the thing itself is but what an expressive motion of the hand is to a generous thought—the symbol and the ornament, but not the essence. Thus much then in addition to my statement of my case. Whatever affects my stomach diseases me; and my stomach is affected either immediately, by disagreeing food, or distressing thoughts, which make all food disagree with me; or indirectly, by any ungenial action upon *the skin,* that *terra incognita* to physician and metaphysician. Now, very cold dry weather, or very hot dry weather, are alike

benignant to me; it is damp, rain, storm, thaw, and thaw-winds—in short, whatever makes the air heavy—that unfailingly deprive me of all power to be useful, excepting as far as the contemplation of my own being, and the exercise by increase of patience are useful: which assuredly they are, regarded as *causae causarum*. This winter, therefore, has been especially unfavourable to me, and it is seldom that even in summer we have a month together of light dry weather—least of all at Bath, that sunless vapoury basin among the hills. I have now had the advice of *four* medical men, and the opinions of all the four coincide with the three-years-old persuasion of my own mind, namely, that I must hope for a cure in such medicines only as can act continuously and regularly for many months together. Of these there are three—regulated diet, tranquillity, and an even and dry climate. The old *Schola Salernitana* with a little alteration expresses the thing exactly, and speaks to me oracularly:

> Si tibi deficiant medici, medici tibi fiant
> Haec tria; mens aequa, aer aequus, et aequa diaeta.

I persist, therefore, in going to Sicily, where I hope to find all three. I was hardly used from

infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to youth most, MOST cruelly, yet 'the joy within me,' which is indeed my own life and my very self, was creating me anew to the first purpose of nature, when other and deeper distress supervened, which many have guessed, but Wordsworth alone knows to the full extent of the calamity; and yet even this I shall master if it please the Almighty to continue in me the thoughts that have been my guides, guardians, and comforters for the last five months.

I look back with honest pride on the latter months of my life, when I review what I have accomplished, under what sufferings. I have now completed my materials (and three months will enable me to send them to the press) for a work, the contents of which you will conjecture from the title: 'Consolations and Comforts from the Exercise and right Application of the Reason, the Imagination, and the Moral Feelings.' The 'Consolations' are addressed to all in adversity, sickness, or distress of mind: the first part entirely practical; the second, in which I consider distress of mind from gloomy speculations, will, of course, be speculative, and will contain a new theodicee, and what will perhaps appear to

many a new basis of morals. The 'Comforts' are addressed to the happy and prosperous, attempting to open to them new, and perhaps better, at all events more numerous and more various, sources of enjoyment. Of this work every page has, and will, come from my heart's heart; and I may venture, dear and honoured friends, to say to you, without dreading from you the imputation of vanity, that what I have written is to my own mind a pure strain of music. While I am writing this work I give one week in the four to poetry; and when I have finished it I shall religiously divide my time. One fortnight in each month I shall then devote to poetry, and the other fortnight to Essays (seven in number, and of which the third will be the first published). The first, on the Genius and Writings of Chaucer. (2) The same, on Spenser. (3) Shakespeare. (4) An Essay, Biographical and Critical, on Milton. (5) An episodical Essay on the supposed Genius, Style, Critical Powers, and Morals of Dr. S. Johnson. (6) On Dryden and Pope. (7) On the Sources of Poetic Pleasure—in which, without using the words bad or good, I simply endeavour to detect the causes and sources of the pleasures, which different styles,

etc., have given in different ages, and then determining their comparative worth, permanency, and compatibility with the nobler parts of our nature, to establish, in the utmost depths to which I can delve, the characteristics of good and bad poetry and the intimate connection of taste and morals. In explaining what I shall do with Shakespeare, I explain the nature of the other five. Each scene of each play I read as if it were the whole of Shakespeare's works—the sole thing extant. I ask myself what are the characteristics, the diction, the cadences, and metre, the character, the passion, the moral or metaphysical inherencies and fitness for theatric effect, and in what sort of theatres. All these I write down with great care and precision of thought and language (and when I have gone through the whole, I then shall collect my papers, and observe how often such and such expressions recur), and thus shall not only know what the characteristics of Shakespeare's plays are, but likewise what proportion they bear to each other. Then, not carelessly, though of course with far less care, I shall read through the old plays, just before Shakespeare's time, Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher,

and Massinger in the same way; so as to see, and to be able to prove, what of Shakespeare belonged to his age, and was common to all *the first-rate men* of that true *saeculum aureum* of English poetry, and what is his own, and his only. Thus I shall both exhibit the characteristics of the plays and of the mind of Shakespeare, and a philosophical analysis and justification of almost every character, at greater or less length, in the spirit of that analysis of the character of Hamlet, with which you were much pleased, and by being so, I solemnly assure, gave me heart and hope, and did me much good. For much as I loathe flattery from the bottom of my very *stomach*, and much as I *wriggle* under the burthen and discomfort of the praise of people, for whose heads, hearts, and specific competence I have small respect, yet I own myself no self-subsisting mind. I know, I feel, that I am weak, apt to faint away, inwardly self-deserted, and bereft of the confidence in my own powers; and that the approbation and sympathy of good and intelligent men is my sea-breeze, without which I should languish from morn to evening,—a very trade-wind to me, in which my bark drives on regularly and lightly.

An author of some celebrity, and more notoriety, was with me all yesterday, and inflicted on me five acts of a tragedy, and all to-day, with aching spirit, I am to be employed in pencil-marking its thousand flatnesses and incongruities of diction and sentiment, in addition to a conversation of two hours yesterday, in which I persuaded him to many essential alterations; and yet, do all I can, I could as easily pray Caligula or (within a month after his arrival in England) Buonaparte out of purgatory as help this poor devil of a tragedy out of absolute damnation. It will die the death of a red-hot poker in water—all one hiss. But what can a decently good-natured man say to a brother bard, who tells you that it is of importance to his happiness and pecuniary circumstances? But for this you would have received a large sheetful of verses in a frank; and will do so in the course of a few days, believe me, in no inconsiderable degree, for the pleasure and relief which I myself shall have in the occupation. Since the last sentence I have been interrupted two hours:—(1) by General Hastings; (2) by Godwin; (3) by the poet Campbell, who stayed a most inordinate time; this being the first time I have ever

conversed with him. And now I must conclude half a sheet sooner than I expected. Only this I must say—it being indeed one half of my purpose when I began the letter,—the more I have thought of the translations from the drawings, the more and more deeply am I persuaded of the excellence of the idea; and no sooner am I anywhere settled than I shall dedicate a certain portion of my time to the realising about twenty,—which I calculate will be a small volume,—of thirteen of which I have already the *leading idea*, that is to say, whether I mean it as a moral-descriptive poem, whether an inscription, whether a tale. I had taken notes of twenty-one drawings from the blue-book, of which I retain a floating and general recollection of all, but an accurate and detailed imagery only of three; and by no industry of search could I find the paper of notes, which, from some over-care or other, I had mislaid. I propose, therefore, if it should be perfectly convenient to you, to pay you a visit for two or three days at Dunmow. You will, I am sure, be so good as not to suffer me to come, if it be in the least degree inconvenient; but you will give me a few lines, and if it be convenient, you will tell me by

what coach, to what place, I get the nearest to you.

Believe me, dear Sir George and dear Lady Beaumont, I remain, with grateful respect and affection, your truly obliged friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

No. 16 *Abingdon Street, Westminster.*

P.S.—I seem to feel uncomfortable in sending off this letter, it is so wholly and exclusively all about *I myself, I;* but really, in the present moment, I am of some anxiety to my own self, and your kindness, dear Sir George, forced me, at least reduced me, into it.

Coleridge to Lady Beaumont.

Monday afternoon, March 5, 1804.

Dear Madam,—Within the last hour four letters at once have been brought to me from Mr. Lamb's, who has been ill, and prevented by illness from attending at the India House; and I too, alas! have been ill and in a sort of stupor, and not knowing of Lamb's illness took it for granted that there were no letters for me. These four all from Dunmow! I was so agitated at the sight that I was incapable of opening either for nearly three-quarters of an hour, and there still remains one from you unopened, and this I literally am as much afraid of as a child of a dark room; at least, I must first assure your Ladyship and Sir George that I will send the acid with the directions by to-morrow's coach. I have been as yet able to gain no certain intelligence respecting the vessel for Malta; and think it unlikely that it will sail so soon as the 10th, for the King's ship is not yet fixed on for their convoy. As to my Christabel, and some

other verses which are preparing for you, I am highly gratified that they are in your possession. The thought that you and Sir George will at times talk of the poem by your fireside, or in your summer evening walks, and sometimes wish for its conclusion, will be one and a strong inducement to me to finish it. I trust I need not say to your Ladyship that in a letter to Dunmow, least of all correspondents should I dare to let my words outstrip my weighed meaning, my inmost feeling.

Now, I think, I have gathered courage to open the letter. It is a kind letter from Sir George. I will not fail to call on Mr. Knight to-morrow before noon. I have been advised by a very eminent physician to try a very small drop of nitric acid (that is, *very pure* aquafortis) placed on the tumour by the point of a fine pen, and to continue this on the same place for some weeks, twice a day. He says he cannot positively answer for its success, as he has only had occasion to advise it in two instances; but that in both of these its success was complete, and if it should answer equally well with me, it would be a very valuable discovery, as it leaves no scar, and spares all the danger that a surgical lancet

might occasion in places near or close upon the glands, especially where there is in the constitution.

* * * * *

Henceforward I shall be sure to receive my letters regularly.

Davy lectures to-night, and I cannot see him till to-morrow.

[*Signature, etc., cut out.*]

Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont.

Thursday, ½ past 11, March 8th, 1804.

Dear Sir George,—I called on Mr. Knight on Tuesday noon. He was engaged with a gentleman in looking over his collection. By the by, whether it were that the sight of so many bronzes all at once infected my eye, as by long looking at the setting sun all objects become purple, or whether there really be a likeness, Mr. Knight's own face represented to my fancy that of a living bronze. It is the hardest countenance I ever beheld in a man of rank and letters; but the myrtle, no less than the yew-tree, starts up from the fissures of the crag, and the vine that rejoices the hearts of gods and men spreads its tendrils and ripens its clusters on the naked rock. In the following moment the likeness of his face to that mask-portrait of Wordsworth at Keswick struck me with greater force; and, till I had left the house, I did not recollect that Lady Beaumont had observed the same. I stayed not above three or four minutes; he

appointed this day noon for my second call, when he is to give me whatever information and whatever assistance may be in his power. Briefly, in *words* he was extremely civil, and this I regarded with complacency as the payment of a debt of attention to your name and recommendation. In tones, looks, and manners he was *embarrassing*, and this I was willing to consider as the effect of my own *unbellerophontic* countenance and mien. No doubt, I *like* a man the better for not being unfavourably impressed by my first appearance, but I never *think* the worse of him for the contrary. However, I have breakfasted at Mr. Greenough's, some forty or fifty doors from Mr. Knight's, and in a few minutes shall fulfil my engagement. . . . In the same parcel I include Daniel's Poems, with the eminent passages of the Hymen's Triumph (for which alone I have sent them) *marked*, and some trifles of my own. But now I must wait on Mr. Knight —which 'wait on' is a vile un-English phrase— and leave the letter open, that I may finish it with the result.

¼ *after one.*—I have left Mr. Knight, time enough, I hope, for the coach. Mr. Knight was

extremely obliging, and no doubt, often seen, would improve into a friendly man. He showed me his views of Sicily, chiefly by Hackart, from which I learnt, what I knew before, that I shall see nothing in Sicily of half the *beauty* of Cumberland, and not a hundredth part of the *number* of the grand and the impressive. My *sole* object is health, I never even think of anything else, even as an *addamus lucro*. Mr. K. will procure me a letter from Lady Hamilton to the manager of Lord Nelson's Sicilian domains, and showed me all his bronzes. I was *highly* delighted, and indeed much instructed. One figure, which you have not seen, though imperfect, absolutely enamoured me. I have seldom in my life experienced such a burst of pleasurable sense of *beauty*. It represents a Venus or Venus-like figure, as from the bath, on one leg, putting on her sandal on the upraised leg. I am not afraid of the charge of using violent language when I say you will be enchanted. On Saturday I write without fail. To-day I expect to meet and dine with Mr. Sotheby at Davy's.—With respectful remembrances to your mother, I am, my dear Sir George, most gratefully and respectfully yours, S. T. COLERIDGE.

Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont.

Friday night, April 6th, 1804,
Spithead, on board the Speedwell.

My dear Sir George,—What I feel deeply, why should I fear to say plainly? and what is there worthy to accompany the reward of a quiet conscience, if it be not the approbation and sympathy of those whom we honestly esteem? It is perhaps no compliment to the world we live in that I hesitated to say that your anxiety for my health would be a strong inducement to me to take care of it. I am often afraid of giving way to my best feelings, lest they should appear as mere *heat* of manner, an overboiling, that puts out the miserable pittance of fire that made it boil. But different constitutions breed different modes of manifestation, and if there are Hatfields in abundance, there is likewise no lack of Iagos. Virtue can exhibit itself in no shape which vice will not learn to counterfeit; and you and I, my honoured friend, will judge by actions, as far as they go, and, where they fail us, by a tact, that

makes us *feel* difference in things, which we shall be puzzled to explain by words.

I was hurried off this morning to my vessel, but the wind has again westered; but our Commodore, Captain H. W. Baynton, of the Leviathan (I wonder whether Mr. or Captain Sotheby knows him?), is to sail with the first puff that wins a point and a half on the hither side of impossibility. We *hope* to go to-morrow; we may be here this day fortnight; it is hard to say which is the more probable. I am better than I was. My spirits are low; and I suffer too often sinkings and misgivings, alienations from the spirit of hope, strange withdrawings out of the life that manifests itself by existence, morbid yearnings condemned by me, almost despised, and yet perhaps at times almost cherished, to concentre my being into stoniness, or to be diffused as among the winds, and lose all individual existence. But all this I well know is a symptom of bodily disease, and no part of sentiment or intellect, closely connected with the excessively irritable state of my stomach and the viscera, and beyond doubt greatly exasperated by the abruptness and suddenness of my late transitions from one state to another. Mercy on me! from Grasmere and

the Wordsworths to London, to drinkings, talkings, discussings, vain and noisy exhibitions, thence another Grasmere (quite another, and yet essentially the same) at Dunmow, again to London, and again a few happy days with you and Lady Beaumont, and whither then? To Portsmouth, among men, kind-hearted indeed, and absolutely eager to serve me, and to express a liking to me that from such men quite astonished me; but among loose livers and loose talkers, with oaths and dirt rattling about my ears like grapeshot, and whistling by me like so many perforated bullets. For at Portsmouth all are mock tars; the whole town is one huge man-of-war of brick and mortar. Positively this night,—that star so very bright over the mast of a noble vessel, and the sound of the water breaking against the ship's side,—it seems quite a *home* to me. Our captain is a mild good sort of man, a Scotchman, prudent, well-meaning, unprofessing, and plain as the best Englishman, and with every appearance of a good sailor. There are two passengers besides me; the one, a half-pay lieutenant turned small merchant, who, with a bright eye over a yellow purple face,—that betrays to me that half his liver is gone or going,—has said four or five times aloud

that good wine never did any man any harm; and an unconscientiously fat woman, who would have wanted elbow-room on Salisbury Plain, a body that might have been, in a less spendthrift mood of Nature, sliced into a company, and a reasonable slice allotted her as corporal! I think I never saw so large a woman, such a monopolist, patentee abstract of superfluous flesh. *Enough of her,* in a double sense of the phrase.

My direction continues to be simply at Mr. J. C. Motley's, Portsmouth. Mr. Motley will have them forwarded to me with more regularity than by the post, and free of expense. The man has been really kind to me; and I hope I have done him some *good* in the best sense of the word. I shall lose no opportunity to write to you; and Lady Beaumont will do me the justice to believe that I have never forgotten her wish respecting the epitaph. I have waited for the time. I will suppose it possible that I may yet again write to you before I lose sight of my native shores, for even in a letter it is painful to me to bid you and your dear lady a last farewell. Nay! that, I trust, never can be the case, never, never! if I and you, honoured friends, are what I believe we are, and continue to be so, then death itself will

be only a voyage, a voyage not *from*, but to our native country ;[1] and fervently I bless and pray for you, dear Sir G. and dear Lady Beaumont.—Your grateful and most affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[1] Compare the side-note to *The Ancient Mariner*, Part iv. st. 10 : 'In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward ; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country, and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.'—ED.

Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont.

Grasmere, July 20, 1804.

Dear Sir George,—Lady Beaumont in a letter to my sister told her some time ago that it was your intention to have written to me, but knowing my aversion to letter-writing you were unwilling to impose upon me the trouble of answering. I am much obliged to you for the honour you intended me, and deeply sensible of your delicacy. If a man were what he ought to be, with such feelings and such motives as I have, it would be as easy for him to write to Sir George Beaumont as to take his food when he was hungry, or his repose when he was weary. But we suffer bad habits to grow upon us, and that has been the case with me, as you have had reason to find and forgive already. I cannot quit the subject without regretting that any weakness of mine should have prevented my hearing from you, which would always give me great delight; and though I cannot presume to say that I should be a *punctual* correspondent, I

am sure I should not be insensible of your kindness, but should also do my best to deserve it.

A few days ago I received from Mr. Southey your very acceptable present of Sir Joshua Reynolds's Works, which, with the Life, I have nearly read through. Several of the Discourses I had read before, though never regularly together: they have very much added to the high opinion which I before entertained of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Of a great part of them, never having had an opportunity of *studying* any pictures whatsoever, I can be but a very inadequate judge; but of such parts of the Discourses as relate to general philosophy, I may be entitled to speak with more confidence; and it gives me great pleasure to say to you, knowing your great regard for Sir Joshua, that they appear to me highly honourable to him. The sound judgment universally displayed in these Discourses is truly admirable,—I mean the deep conviction of the necessity of unwearied labour and diligence, the reverence for the great men of his art, and the comprehensive and unexclusive character of his taste. Is it not a pity, Sir George, that a man with such a high sense of the *dignity* of his art, and with such industry, should not have given

more of his time to the nobler departments of painting? I do not say this so much on account of what the world would have gained by the superior excellence and interest of his pictures, though doubtless that would have been very considerable, but for the sake of example. It is such an animating sight to see a man of genius, regardless of temporary gains, whether of money or praise, fixing his attention solely upon what is intrinsically interesting and permanent, and finding his happiness in an entire devotion of himself to such pursuits as shall most ennoble human nature. We have not yet seen enough of this in modern times; and never was there a period in society when such examples were likely to do more good than at present. The industry and love of truth which distinguish Sir Joshua's mind are most admirable; but he appears to me to have lived too much for the age in which he lived, and the people among whom he lived, though this in an infinitely less degree than his friend Burke, of whom Goldsmith said, with such truth, long ago, that,

> Born for the universe, he narrowed his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.

I should not have said thus much of Reynolds,

which I have not said without pain, but because I have so great a respect for his character, and because he lived at a time when, being the first Englishman distinguished for excellence in the higher department of painting, he had the field fairly open for him to have given an example, upon which all eyes must needs have been fixed, of a man preferring the cultivation and exertion of his own powers in the highest possible degree to any other object of regard. My writing is growing quite illegible. I must therefore either mend it, or throw down the pen.

How sorry we all are under this roof that we cannot have the pleasure of seeing you and Lady Beaumont down this summer! The weather has been most glorious, and the country, of course, most delightful. Our own valley in particular was last night, by the light of the full moon, and in the perfect stillness of the lake, a scene of loveliness and repose as affecting as was ever beheld by the eye of man. We have had a day and a half of Mr. Davy's company at Grasmere, and no more: he seemed to leave us with great regret, being post-haste on his way to Edinburgh. I went with him to Patterdale, on his road to Penrith, where he would take coach.

We had a deal of talk about you and Lady Beaumont. He was a letter in your debt, as I found, and exceedingly sorry that he had not been able to get over to see you, having been engaged at Mr. Coke's sheep-shearing, which had not left him time to cross from the Duke of Bedford's to your place. We had a very pleasant interview, though far too short. He is a most interesting man, whose views are fixed upon worthy objects.

That Loughrigg Tarn, beautiful pool of water as it is, is a perpetual mortification to me when I think that you and Lady Beaumont were so near having a summer-nest there. This is often talked over among us; and we always end the subject with a heigh-ho! of regret. But I must think of concluding. My sister thanks Lady Beaumont for her last letter, and will write to her in a few days; but I must say to her myself how happy I was to hear that her sister had derived any consolation from Coleridge's poems and mine. I must also add how much pleasure it gives me that Lady Beaumont is so kindly, so affectionately disposed to my dear and good sister, and also to the other unknown parts of my family. Could we but have Coleridge back

among us again! There is no happiness in this life but in intellect and virtue. Those were very pretty verses which Lady Beamount sent; and we were much obliged to her for them.

What shocking bad writing I have sent you! I don't know how it is, but it seems as if I could not write any better.

Farewell.—Believe me, with the sincerest love and affection for you and Lady Beaumont, yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Coleridge to Sir George and Lady Beaumont.

August 1, 1804, *Malta.*

My dear Friends,—Lady Beaumont once told me that when she was young, as a means of awakening devotional feelings, she often imaged to herself a mountain, or sea-shore, or something great in Nature. O be assured, dear Sir George and dear Lady Beaumont, that affectionate and grateful feelings never visit me of their own accord, but they bring your remembrance along with them; and that I never in any mood think of you but there commences a new going on in my heart. But I have but a few minutes to write to you. I must therefore make haste to say that Major Adye goes through Sicily to Naples, and from thence makes the best of his way to Gibraltar; and that he has in trust, and will expedite by the first safe opportunity, a series of letters to you, containing my few, very few, adventures, and my topographical and political information. Not knowing exactly where to direct to you, I have addressed the outward cover to D. Stuart, Esq., *Courier* Office, who will

take care of it till sent for. I shall go to Syracuse, Catania, Etna, Messina, and perhaps to Naples, with Major Adye and two other Gibraltar gentlemen, and, of course, shall add to my packet the journal of my hasty tour. From thence I shall return to Syracuse, and probably spend six weeks there, thence back again to Malta, and there winter. I am as comfortable here as a man can be, and as happy as *I* can be, absent from England, and from all that make England so dear to me. I live at the Palace of St. Antoni's, in the country, four miles from La Vallette, and when in town in the Palace at La Vallette. A parent could scarcely be kinder to me than Sir A. Ball, the Governor. Great as the heat has been on the thermometer, 85 to 87 degrees, yet there is always a free air here, and I have never once felt the heat oppressive. I take care not to expose myself, and take my exercise from five to seven in the morning, and not till after seven in the evening. The climate *to me* appears heavenly, and the sirocco a mere joke, compared with our close *drizzly* weather in England. On the whole, my health is, I hope, better. I am scarcely ever ill, and very seldom am tormented with distressful dreams;

but though exceedingly careful and temperate, my appetite is languid, my stomach faint, and I have reason to know that I rather enjoy a reprieve, in consequence of the absence of the diseasing causes, than have acquired strength to bear up against them. But I have only tried the season of inclement heat, and have everything to hope from late autumn, winter, and early spring. Sir A. B. will send this letter among his. Dear and honoured friends, daily do I think of you, and often, often have I prayed for you both.—Alike in Malta and in England, I am, dear Sir George and dear Lady Beaumont, with heartfelt respect, your grateful and most devoted friend, S. T. COLERIDGE.

I arrived here, as you will have heard, on the 18th of May. Since then we have had three showery forenoons, and this is deemed an uncommonly wet summer. We have had an earthquake or two. I have received only one very short letter from England, and that completely unintelligible to me from allusions to others, which evil chance has taken to the Fleet. The disappointment was so great as make me seriously ill for two days.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, August 30 (?), 1804.

Dear Sir George,—Wednesday last, Mrs. Coleridge, as she may, perhaps, herself have informed you or Lady Beaumont, received a letter from Coleridge. I happened to be at Keswick when it arrived; and she has sent it over to us to-day. I will transcribe the most material parts of it, first assuring you, to remove anxiety on your part, that the contents are, we think, upon the whole, promising. He begins thus (date, June 5, 1804, Tuesday noon; Dr. Stoddart's, Malta):—'I landed, in more than usual health, in the harbour of Valetta, about four o'clock, Friday afternoon, April 18. Since then I have been waiting, day after day, for the departure of Mr. Laing, tutor of the only child of Sir A. Ball, our civil governor.'

* * * * *

Mrs. Wordsworth and Lady B.'s little god-daughter[1] are both doing very well. Had the child been a boy, we should have persisted in

our right to avail ourselves of Lady Beaumont's goodness in offering to stand sponsor for it. The name of *Dorothy*, obsolete as it is now grown, had been so long devoted in my own thoughts to the first daughter that I might have, that I could not break this promise to myself—a promise in which my wife participated; though the name of *Mary*, to my ear the most musical and truly English in sound we have, would have otherwise been most welcome to me, including, as it would, Lady Beaumont and its mother. This last sentence, though in a letter to you, Sir George, is intended for Lady Beaumont.

* * * * *

When I ventured to express my regret at Sir Joshua Reynolds giving so much of his time to portrait-painting and to his friends, I did not mean to recommend absolute solitude and seclusion from the world, as an advantage to him or anybody else. I think it a great evil; and indeed, in the case of a painter, frequent intercourse with the living world seems absolutely necessary to keep the mind in health and vigour. I spoke, in some respects, in compliment to Sir Joshua Reynolds, feeling deeply, as I do, the power of his genius, and loving passionately the

labours of genius in every way in which I am capable of comprehending them. Mr. Malone, in the account prefixed to the Discourses, tells us that Sir Joshua generally passed the time from eleven till four every day in portrait-painting. This it was that grieved me, as a sacrifice of great things to little ones. It will give me great pleasure to hear from you at your leisure. I am anxious to know that you are satisfied with the site and intended plan of your house. I suppose no man ever built a house without finding, when it was finished, that something in it might have been better done. *Internal* architecture seems to have arrived at great excellence in England; but, I don't know how it is, I scarcely ever see the *outside* of a new house that pleases me. But I must break off.—Believe me, with best remembrances from my wife and sister to yourself and Lady Beaumont, yours, with the greatest respect and regard,

W. Wordsworth.

My poetical labours have been entirely suspended during the last two months: I am most anxious to return to them.

[1] Dora Wordsworth, born August 16, 1804.—Ed.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, September 8th.[1]

* * * * *

You will be glad to hear that I have been busily employed lately. I wrote one book of The Recluse, nearly 1000 lines, then had a rest. Last week began again, and have written 300 more. I hope all tolerably well, and certainly with good views.

* * * * *

My sister received Lady Beaumont's letter from Mulgrave last night. She would have written ere this, but knew not what to say about Coleridge, waiting in hope that we might have letters from him that would be more satisfactory. I am glad Wilkie is with you. Pray remember me to him.

* * * * *

I have been at Whitby several times. Once in particular I remember seeing a most extraordinary effect from the pier, produced by the bold and ragged shore in a misty and showery day. The appearance was as of a set of huge

faces in profile, one behind the other, with noses of prodigious prominence. The whole was very fantastic, and yet grand.

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[1] No year is given, but it cannot be later than 1804.—ED.

Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont.

Grasmere, Dec. 25th, 1804.

My dear Sir George,—Long since ought I to have thanked you for your last affectionate letter; but I knew how indulgent you were, and therefore fell, I won't say more easily, but surely with far less pain to myself, into my old trick of procrastination. I was deeply sensible of your kindness in inviting me to Grosvenor Square, and then felt and still feel a strong inclination to avail myself of the opportunity of cultivating your friendship and that of Lady Beaumont, and of seeing a little of the world at the same time. But as the wish is strong there are also strong obstacles against it: first, though I have lately been tolerably industrious, I am far behind-hand with my appointed work; and next, my nervous system is so apt to be deranged by going from home, that I am by no means sure that I should not be so much of a dependent invalid . . . as to make it absolutely

improper for me to obtrude myself where neither my exertions of mind or body could enable me to be tolerable company. I say nothing of my family, because a short absence would be abundantly recompensed by the pleasure of a 'sweet return.' At all events, I must express my sincere thanks for your kindness and the pleasure which I received from your letter, breathing throughout such favourable dispositions, I may say such earnest friendship, towards me.

I think we are completely agreed upon the subject of Sir Joshua—that is, we both regret that he did not devote more of his time to the higher branches of the Art; and further, I think you join with me in lamenting, to a certain degree at least, that he did not live more to himself. I have since read the rest of his Discourses, with which I have been greatly pleased, and wish most heartily that I could have an opportunity of seeing in your company your own collection of pictures and some others in town, Mr. Angerstein's for instance, to have pointed out to me some of those finer and peculiar beauties of painting, which I am afraid I shall never have an occasion of becoming sufficiently familiar with pictures to discover of

myself. There is not a day in my life when I am at home in which that exquisite little drawing of yours of Applethwaite does not affect me with a sense of harmony and grace, which I cannot describe. Mr. Edridge, an artist whom you know, saw this drawing along with a Mr. Duppa, another artist, who published 'Hints from Raphael and Michael Angelo'; and they were both most enthusiastic in their praise of it, to my great delight. By the by, I thought Mr. Edridge a man of very mild and pleasing manners, and as far as I could judge, of delicate feelings, in the province of his Art. Duppa is publishing a Life of Michael Angelo, and I received from him a few days ago two proof-sheets of an Appendix which contains the poems of M. A., which I shall read, and translate one or two of them, if I can do it with decent success. I have peeped into the Sonnets, and they do not appear unworthy of their great author.

You will be pleased to hear that I have been advancing with my work. I have written upwards of 2000 verses during the last ten weeks. I do not know if you are exactly acquainted with the plan of my poetical labour. It is two-

fold—first, a poem, to be called The Recluse; in which it will be my object to express in verse my most interesting feelings concerning man, nature, and society; and next, a poem (in which I am at present chiefly engaged) on my earlier life, or the growth of my own mind, taken up upon a large scale. This latter work I expect to have finished before the month of May; and then I purpose to fall with all my might on the former, which is the chief object upon which my thoughts have been fixed these many years. Of this poem, that of The Pedlar, which Coleridge read you, is part, and I may have written of it altogether about 2000 lines. It will consist, I hope, of about ten or twelve thousand.

May we not hope for the pleasure of seeing you and Lady Beaumont down here next summer? I flatter myself that Coleridge will then be returned, and though we would not on any account that he should fix himself in this rainy part of England, yet perhaps we may have the happiness of meeting all together for a few weeks. We have lately built in our little rocky orchard a circular hut, lined with moss, like a wren's nest, and coated on the outside

with heath, that stands most charmingly, with several views from the different sides of it, of the Lake, the Valley, and the Church — sadly spoiled, however, lately by being white-washed. The little retreat is most delightful, and I am sure you and Lady Beaumont would be highly pleased with it. Coleridge has never seen it. What a happiness would it be to us to see him there, and entertain you all next summer in our homely way under its shady thatch. I will copy a dwarf inscription which I wrote for it the other day, before the building was entirely finished, which indeed it is not yet.

> No whimsy of the purse is here,
> No pleasure-house forlorn;
> Use, comfort, do this roof endear;
> A tributary shed to cheer
> The little cottage that is near,
> To help it and adorn.

I hope the young Roscius, if he go on as he has begun, will rescue the English theatre from the infamy that has fallen upon it, and restore the reign of good sense and nature. From what you have seen, Sir George, do you think he could manage a character of Shakespeare? Neither Selim nor Douglas requires much power; but even to perform them as he does, talents and

genius I should think must be necessary. I had very little hope, I confess, thinking it very natural that a theatre which had brought a dog upon the stage as a principal performer would catch at a wonder whatever shape it might put on.

We have had no tidings of Coleridge these several months. He spoke of papers which he had sent by private hands, none of which *we* have received. It must be most criminal neglect somewhere, if the fever be suffered to enter Malta.—Farewell, and believe me, my dear Sir George, your affectionate and sincere friend,

W. Wordsworth.

Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont.

Grasmere, May 1st, 1805.

My dear Sir George,—I have wished to write to you every day this long time, but I have also had another wish, which has interfered to prevent me; I mean the wish to resume my poetical labours: time was stealing away fast from me and nothing done, and my mind still seeming unfit to do anything. At first I had a strong impulse to write a poem that should record my brother's virtues, and be worthy of his memory. I began to give vent to my feelings, with this view, but I was overpowered by my subject, and could not proceed. I composed much, but it is all lost except a few lines, as it came from me in such a torrent that I was unable to remember it. I could not hold the pen myself, and the subject was such that I could not employ Mrs. Wordsworth or my sister as my amanuensis. This work must therefore rest a while till I am something calmer; I shall, however, never be at peace till, as far as in me lies, I have done justice to my

departed brother's memory. His heroic death (the particulars of which I have now accurately collected from several of the survivors) exacts this from me, and still more his singularly interesting character, and virtuous and innocent life.

Unable to proceed with this work, I turned my thoughts again to the Poem on my own Life, and you will be glad to hear that I have added 300 lines to it in the course of last week. Two books more will conclude it. It will be not much less than 9000 lines,—not hundred but thousand lines long,—an alarming length! and a thing unprecedented in literary history that a man should talk so much about himself. It is not self-conceit, as you will know well, that has induced me to do this, but real humility. I began the work because I was unprepared to treat any more arduous subject, and diffident of my own powers. Here, at least, I hoped that to a certain degree I should be sure of succeeding, as I had nothing to do but describe what I had felt and thought; therefore could not easily be bewildered. This might certainly have been done in narrower compass by a man of more address; but I have done my best. If, when the work shall be finished, it appears to the judicious to have re-

dundancies, they shall be lopped off, if possible; but this is very difficult to do, when a man has written with thought; and this defect, whenever I have suspected it, or found it to exist in any writings of mine, I have always found incurable. The fault lies too deep, and is in the first conception. If you see Coleridge before I do, do not speak of this to him, as I should like to have his judgment unpreoccupied by such an apprehension. I wish much to have your further opinion of the young Roscius, above all of his Hamlet. It is certainly impossible that he should understand the character, that is, the composition of the character. But many of the sentiments which are put into Hamlet's mouth he may be supposed to be capable of feeling, and to a certain degree of entering into the spirit of some of the situations. I never saw Hamlet acted myself, nor do I know what kind of a play they make of it. I think I have heard that some parts which I consider among the finest are omitted: in particular, Hamlet's wild language after the ghost has disappeared. The players have taken intolerable liberties with Shakespeare's Plays, especially with Richard the Third, which, though a character admirably conceived and

drawn, is in some scenes bad enough in Shakespeare himself; but the play, as it is now acted, has always appeared to me a disgrace to the English stage. Hamlet, I suppose, is treated by them with more reverence. They are both characters far, far above the abilities of any actor whom I have ever seen. Henderson was before my time, and, of course, Garrick.

We are looking anxiously for Coleridge; perhaps he may be with you now.

Is your building going on? I was mortified that the sweet little valley, of which you spoke some time ago, was no longer in the possession of your family: it is the place, I believe, where that illustrious and most extraordinary man, Beaumont the poet, and his brother, were born. One is astonished when one thinks of that man having been only eight-and-twenty years of age, for I believe he was no more when he died. Shakespeare, we are told, had scarcely written a single play at that age. I hope, for the sake of poets, you are proud of these men.

Lady Beaumont mentioned some time ago that you were painting a picture from The Thorn: is it finished? I should like to see it; the poem is a favourite with me, and I shall love it the

better for the honour you have done it. We shall be most happy to have the other drawing which you promised us some time ago. The dimensions of the Applethwaite one are eight inches high, and a very little above ten broad; this, of course, exclusive of the margin.

* * * * *

When we look back upon this spring, it seems like a dreary dream to us. But I trust in God that we shall yet 'bear up and steer right onward.'

Farewell.—I am, your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

My sister thanks Lady Beaumont for her letter, the short one of the other day, and hopes to be able to write soon. Have you seen Southey's Madoc? We have it in the house, but have deferred reading it, having been too busy with the child. I should like to know how it pleases you.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, June 3d, 1805.

My dear Sir George,—I write to you from the moss-hut at the top of my orchard, the sun just sinking behind the hills in front of the entrance, and his light falling upon the green moss of the side opposite me. A linnet is singing in the tree above, and the children of some of our neighbours, who have been to-day little John's visitors, are playing below, equally noisy and happy. The green fields in the level area of the vale, and part of the lake, lie before me in quietness. I have just been reading two newspapers, full of factious brawls about Lord Melville and his delinquencies, ravage of the French in the West Indies, victories of the English in the East, fleets of ours roaming the sea in search of enemies whom they cannot find, etc. etc. etc.; and I have asked myself more than once lately, if my affections can be in the right place, caring as I do so little about what the world seems to care so much for. All this seems to me, 'a tale told by an idiot, full of

sound and fury, signifying nothing.' It is pleasant in such a mood to turn one's thoughts to a good man and a dear friend. I have, therefore, taken up the pen to write to you. And, first, let me thank you (which I ought to have done long ago, and should have done, but that I knew I had a licence from you to procrastinate) for your most acceptable present of Coleridge's portrait, welcome in itself, and more so as coming from you. It is as good a resemblance as I expect to see of Coleridge, taking it all together, for I consider C.'s as a face absolutely impracticable. Mrs. Wordsworth was overjoyed at the sight of the print; Dorothy and I much pleased. We think it excellent about the eyes and forehead, which are the finest parts of C.'s face, and the general contour of the face is well given; but, to my sister and me, it seems to fail sadly about the middle of the face, particularly at the bottom of the nose. Mrs. W. feels this also; and my sister so much, that, except when she covers the whole of the middle of the face, it seems to her so entirely to alter the expression, as rather to confound than revive in her mind the remembrance of the original. We think, as far as mere likeness goes, Hazlitt's is better;

but the expression in Hazlitt's is quite dolorous and funereal; that in this is much more pleasing, though certainly falling far below what one would wish to see infused into a picture of C. Mrs. C. received a day or two ago a letter from a friend who had letters from Malta, not from Coleridge, but a Miss Stoddart, who is there with her brother. These letters are of the date of the fifth of March, and speak of him as looking well and being well, and talking of coming home, but doubtful whether by land or sea.

I have the pleasure to say that I finished my poem[1] about a fortnight ago. I had looked forward to the day as a most happy one; and I was indeed grateful to God for giving me life to complete the work, such as it is. But it was not a happy day for me; I was dejected on many accounts: when I looked back upon the performance, it seemed to have a dead weight about it,—the reality so far short of the expectation. It was the first long labour that I had finished; and the doubt whether I should ever live to write The Recluse, and the sense which I had of this poem being so far below what I seemed capable of executing, depressed me much; above all, many heavy thoughts of my poor departed

brother hung upon me, the joy which I should have had in showing him the manuscript, and a thousand other vain fancies and dreams. I have spoken of this, because it was a state of feeling new to me, the occasion being new. This work may be considered as a sort of *portico* to The Recluse, part of the same building, which I hope to be able, ere long, to begin with in earnest; and if I am permitted to bring it to a conclusion, and to write, further, a narrative poem of the epic kind, I shall consider the task of my life as over. I ought to add, that I have the satisfaction of finding the present poem not quite of so alarming a length as I apprehended.

I wish much to hear from you, if you have leisure; but as you are so indulgent to me, it would be the highest injustice were I otherwise to you.

We have read Madoc, and been highly pleased with it. It abounds in beautiful pictures and descriptions, happily introduced, and there is an animation diffused through the whole story; though it cannot, perhaps, be said that any of the characters interest you much, except, perhaps, young Llewelyn, whose situation is highly interesting, and he appears to me the

best conceived and sustained character in the piece. His speech to his uncle at their meeting in the island is particularly interesting. The poem fails in the highest gifts of the poet's mind, imagination in the true sense of the word, and knowledge of human nature and the human heart. There is nothing that shows the hand of the great master; but the beauties in description are innumerable; for instance, that of the figure of the bard, towards the beginning of the convention of the bards, receiving the poetic inspiration; that of the wife of Tlalala, the savage, going out to meet her husband; that of Madoc, and the Aztecan king with a long name, preparing for battle; everywhere, indeed, you have beautiful descriptions, and it is a work which does the author high credit, I think. I should like to know your opinion of it. Farewell! Best remembrances and love to Lady Beaumont.—Believe me, my dear Sir George, your most sincere friend, W. WORDSWORTH.

My sister thanks Lady Beaumont for her letter, and will write in a few days. I find that Lady B. has been pleased much by Madoc.

[1] The Prelude.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, July 29th, 1805.

My dear Sir George,—We have all here been made happy in hearing that you are so much better. I write now chiefly on account of a mistake which you seem to be under concerning Coleridge. I guess from your letter that you suppose him to be appointed to the place of secretary to Sir A. Ball. This is by no means the case. He is merely an occasional substitute for Mr. Chapman, who is secretary, and no doubt must have resumed his office long before this; as he had been expected every day some time before the date of C.'s last letter. The paragraph in the paper (which we also saw) positively states that C. is appointed secretary. This is an error, and has been merely put in upon common rumour.

When you were ill I had a thought which I will mention to you. It was this: I wished to know how you were at present situated as to house-room at Coleorton, that is, whether you

could have found a corner for me to put my head in, in case I could have contrived to have commanded three weeks' time, or so. I am at present, and shall be for some time, engaged with a sick friend, who has come all the way from Bristol on purpose to see us, and has taken lodgings in the village; but should you be unwell again, and my company be like to tend in the least to exhilarate you, I should like to know. that were it in my power to go and see you, I might have the liberty to do so.

Having such reason to expect Coleridge at present (were we at liberty in other respects), I cannot think of taking my family a tour, agreeable to your kind suggestion. Something has, however, already been added by your means to our comforts, in the way of books, and probably we shall be able to make an excursion ere the summer be over.

By the by, are you possessed of Houbraken and Vertue's 'Heads of Illustrious Persons,' with anecdotes of their lives by Birch? I had an opportunity of purchasing a handsome copy (far below the price at which it now sells, I believe, in London) at Penrith, a few weeks ago; and if you have not a copy, and think the work has any

merit, you would please me greatly by giving it a place in your library.

I am glad you like the passage in Madoc about Llewelyn. Southey's mind does not seem strong enough to draw the picture of a hero. The character of Madoc is often very insipid and contemptible; for instance, when he is told that the Hoamen have surprised Caermadoc, and of course (he has reason to believe) butchered or carried away all the women and children, what does the author make him do? Think of Goervyl and Llayan very tenderly forsooth; but not a word about his people! In short, according to my notion, the character is throughout languidly conceived, and, as you observe, the contrast between her and Llewelyn makes him look very mean. I made a mistake when I pointed out a beautiful passage as being in the beginning of the meeting of the bards; it occurs before, and ends thus:

> His eyes were closed;
> His head, as if in reverence to receive
> The inspiration, bent; and as he raised
> His glowing countenance and brighter eye
> And swept with passionate hands the ringing harp.

The verses of your ancestor Francis Beaumont the younger, are very elegant and harmonious

and written with true feeling. Is this the only poem of his extant? There are some pleasing verses (I think by Corbet, Bishop of Norwich) on the death of Francis Beaumont the elder. They end, I remember, thus, alluding to his short life:

> By whose sole death appears,
> Wit 's a disease consumes men in few years.

I have never seen the works of the brother of the dramatic poet; but I know he wrote a poem upon the Battle of Bosworth Field. Probably it will be in the volume which you have found, which it would give me great pleasure to see, as also Charnwood Rocks, which must have a striking effect in that country. I am highly flattered by Lady Beaumont's favourable opinion of me and my poems.

My sister will answer her affectionate letter very soon; she would have done it before now, but she has been from home three days and unwell, or entirely engrossed with some visitors whom we have had, the rest of her time.

The letter which you will find accompanying this is from an acquaintance of ours to his wife. He lives at Patterdale, and she was over at Grasmere. We thought it would interest you.

Farewell.—I remain, in hopes of good news of your health, your affectionate and sincere friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

From Mr. Luff of Patterdale to his Wife.

Patterdale, July 23d (1805).

An event happened here last night which has greatly affected the whole village, and particularly myself.

The body, or, more properly speaking, bones of a poor fellow were yesterday found by Willy Harrison, in the rocks at the head of Red Tarn. It appears that he was attempting to descend the Pass from Helvellyn to the Tarn, when he lost his footing and was dashed to pieces.

His name appears to have been Charles Gough. Several things were found in his pockets; fishing tackle, memorandums, a gold watch, silver pencil, Claude Lorraine glasses, etc.

Poor fellow! It is very strange, but we met him when we were last reviewed in April; and he then wanted John Harrison to turn back with him and go to the Tarn; but he was told that his request could not be complied with. It

appears that he proceeded [forward] and met his fate.

You will be much interested to know that a spaniel bitch was found alive by his side, where she has remained upwards of three months, guarding the bones of her master; but she had become so wild that it was with difficulty she was taken. She is in good condition; and, what is more odd, had whelped a pup, which from its size must have lived some weeks, but when found was lying dead by the bones. The bones are as completely freed from flesh as if they had been anatomised, and perfectly white and dry. The head can nowhere be found. The arms, one thigh, and a leg, were all that remained in the clothes. All the rest were scattered about here and there.

When I reflect on my own wanderings and the many dangerous situations I have found myself in, in the pursuit of game, I cannot help thanking Providence that I am now here to relate to you this melancholy tale. I wonder whether poor Fan's affection would under similar circumstances have equalled that of the little spaniel.

Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont.

Grasmere, August 1st.[1]

My dear Friend,—It was very good in you to write to me, much more than I deserved, as I have shown by suffering your letter to remain so long unanswered. I deserve your friendship, I hope, but not your letters; indeed, I am unworthy of anybody's, being a correspondent intolerably remiss. I am glad you liked the verses.[2] I could not but write them with feeling, having such a subject, and one that touched me so nearly. Your delicacy in not leading me to the picture[3] did not escape me. It is a melancholy satisfaction to me to connect my dear brother with anybody whom I love much; and I knew that the verses would give you pleasure as a proof of my affection for you. The picture was to me a very moving one; it exists in my mind at this moment as if it were before my eyes.

We have been looking every day for a letter from Lady Beaumont, with a hope still remaining that we may see you this summer. Lady Beaumont speaks, in her last, of your health being better; we were much concerned to hear that you had not been so well as usual. You need not fear that any inability on your part thoroughly to enjoy the country would make your company less acceptable. You would certainly enjoy much, and we should have the pleasure of contributing to your pleasure, with the hope of seeing you better, which would brighten everything.

I do not know whether my sister has written since we had another account of Coleridge, I am sorry I cannot say *from* him. He was at Leghorn, with a friend, on their way to England: so that we still continue to look for him daily. He had lost *all* his papers; *how* we are not told. This grieves and vexes me much; probably (but it is not on this account—his loss being I daresay irreparable—that I am either much vexed or grieved) a large collection of the poems is gone with the rest; among others five books of the Poem upon my own Life, but of all these I have copies. He, I am afraid, has none of his old

writings. Within this last month I have returned to The Recluse, and have written 700 additional lines. Should Coleridge return, so that I might have some conversation with him on the subject, I should go on swimmingly. We have been very little interrupted with tourist company this summer, and, of course, being for the most part well, have enjoyed ourselves much. I am now writing in the moss-hut,[4] which is my study, with a heavy thunder shower pouring down before me. It is a place of retirement for the eye (though the public road glimmers through the apple-trees a few yards below), and well suited to my occupations. I cannot, however, refrain from smiling at the situation in which I sometimes find myself here; as, for instance, the other morning when I was calling some lofty notes out of my harp, chanting of shepherds, and solitude, etc., I heard a voice (which I knew to be a male voice, whose also it was) crying out from the road below, in a tone exquisitely effeminate, 'Sautez, sautez, apportez, apportez; vous ne le ferez pas, venez donc Pandore, venez, venez.' Guess who this creature could be thus speaking to his lap-dog, in the midst of our venerable mountains? It is one of two nonde-

scripts who have taken the cottage for the summer which we thought you might occupy, and who go about, parading the valley, in all kinds of fantastic dresses, green leather caps, turkey half-boots, jackets of fine linen, or long dressing-gowns, as suit them. Now you hear them in the roads; now you find them lolling in this attire, book in hand, by a brook side. Then they pass your window in their curricle,—to-day the horses tandem-wise, and to-morrow abreast, or on horseback, as suits their fancies. One of them we suspect to be painted, and the other, though a pale-cheeked puppy, is surely not surpassed by his blooming brother. If you come you will see them, and I promise you they will be a treat to you. We still think it possible that we may winter at Coleorton, but we shrink from the thought of going so far without seeing you, and if we procure a house in this neighbourhood we certainly shall. We are the more willing to be kept in a state of suspense as long as Coleridge is unarrived. I don't know that after expressing my thanks for your many kindnesses to me when under your roof, and at all times, and the happiness I derive from your friendship, I can fill this paper better than by adding a

sonnet from Michael Angelo, translated some time since. Farewell,—yours most affectionately, W. WORDSWORTH.

[Then follows the sonnet *To the Supreme Being*, beginning 'The prayers I make,' etc.]

[1] The year is not given, but it must be 1805.—ED.

[2] The Elegiac Stanzas suggested by a picture of Peele Castle in a storm.—ED.

[3] Sir George's own picture of Peele Castle, which suggested the stanzas.—ED.

[4] The moss-hut in the orchard garden, behind Dove Cottage. See p. 80; also Dorothy Wordsworth's letter to Lady Beaumont, June 17, 1806.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, October 17th, 1805.

My dear Sir George,—I was very glad to learn that you had room for me at Coleorton, and far more so, that your health was so much mended. Lady Beaumont's last letter to my sister has made us wish that you were fairly through your present engagements with workmen and builders, and, as to improvements, had smoothed over the first difficulties, and gotten things into a way of improving themselves. I do not suppose that any man ever built a house, without finding in the progress of it obstacles that were unforeseen, and something that might have been better planned; things teasing and vexatious when they come, however the mind may have been made up at the outset to a general expectation of the kind.

With respect to the grounds, you have there the advantage of being in good hands, namely, those of Nature; and, assuredly, whatever petty crosses from contrariety of opinion or any other cause you may now meet with, these will

soon disappear, and leave nothing behind but satisfaction and harmony. Setting out from the distinction made by Coleridge which you mentioned, that your house will belong to the country, and not the country be an appendage to your house, you cannot be wrong. Indeed, in the present state of society, I see nothing interesting either to the imagination or the heart, and, of course, nothing which true taste can approve, in any interference with Nature, grounded upon any other principle. In times when the feudal system was in its vigour, and the personal importance of every chieftain might be said to depend entirely upon the extent of his landed property and rights of seignory; when the king, in the habits of people's minds, was considered as the primary and true proprietor of the soil, which was granted out by him to different lords, and again by them to their several tenants under them, for the joint defence of all—there might have been something imposing to the imagination in the whole face of a district, testifying, obtrusively even, its dependence upon its chief. Such an image would have been in the spirit of the society, implying power, grandeur, military state, and security; and, less directly, in the

person of the chief, high birth, and knightly education and accomplishments; in short, the most of what was then deemed interesting or affecting. Yet, with the exception of large parks and forests, nothing of this kind was known at that time, and these were left in their wild state, so that such display of ownership, so far from taking from the beauty of Nature, was itself a chief cause of that beauty being left unspoiled and unimpaired. The *improvements*, when the place was sufficiently tranquil to admit of any, though absurd and monstrous in themselves, were confined (as our present Laureate has observed, I remember, in one of his Essays) to an acre or two about the house in the shape of garden with terraces, etc. So that Nature had greatly the advantage in those days, when what has been called English gardening was unheard of. This is now beginning to be perceived, and we are setting out to travel backwards. Painters and poets have had the credit of being reckoned the fathers of English gardening; they will also have, hereafter, the better praise of being fathers of a better taste. Error is in general nothing more than getting hold of good things, as everything has two handles, by the wrong one.

It was a misconception of the meaning and principles of poets and painters which gave countenance to the modern system of gardening, which is now, I hope, on the decline; in other words, we are submitting to the rule which you at present are guided by, that of having our houses belong to the country, which will of course lead us back to the simplicity of Nature. And leaving your own individual sentiments and present work out of the question, what good can come of any other guide, under any circumstances? We have, indeed, distinctions of rank, hereditary legislators, and large landed proprietors; but from numberless causes the state of society is so much altered, that nothing of that lofty or imposing interest, formerly attached to large property in land, can now exist; none of the poetic pride, and pomp, and circumstance; nor anything that can be considered as making amends for violation done to the holiness of Nature. Let us take an extreme case, such as a residence of a Duke of Norfolk, or Northumberland: of course you would expect a mansion, in some degree answerable to their consequence, with all conveniencies. The names of Howard and Percy will always stand high in

the regards of Englishmen; but it is degrading, not only to such families as these, but to every really interesting one, to suppose that their importance will be most felt where most displayed, particularly in the way I am now alluding to. This is contracting a general feeling into a local one. Besides, were it not so as to what concerns the past, a man would be sadly astray, who should go, for example, to modernise Alnwick and its dependencies, with his head full of the ancient Percies: he would find nothing there which would remind him of them, except by contrast; and of that kind of admonition he would, indeed, have enough. But this by the by, for it is against the principle itself I am contending, and not the misapplication of it. After what was said above, I may ask if anything connected with the families of Howard and Percy, and their rank and influence, and thus with the state of government and society, could, in the present age, be deemed a recompence for their thrusting themselves in between us and Nature. Surely it is a substitution of little things for great when we would put a whole country into a nobleman's livery. I know nothing which to me would be so pleasing or affecting, as to be

able to say when I am in the midst of a large estate—This man is not the victim of his condition; he is not the spoiled child of worldly grandeur; the thought of himself does not take the lead in his enjoyments; he is, where he ought to be, lowly-minded, and has human feelings; he has a true relish of simplicity, and therefore stands the best chance of being happy; at least, without it there is no happiness, because there can be no true sense of the bounty and beauty of the creation, or insight into the constitution of the human mind. Let a man of wealth and influence show, by the appearance of the country in his neighbourhood, that he treads in the steps of the good sense of the age, and occasionally goes foremost; let him give countenance to improvements in agriculture, steering clear of the pedantry of it, and showing that its grossest utilities will connect themselves harmoniously with the more intellectual arts, and even thrive the best under such connection; let him do his utmost to be surrounded with tenants living comfortably, which will always bring with it the best of all graces which a country can have—flourishing fields and happy-looking houses; and, in that part of his estate

devoted to park and pleasure-ground, let him keep himself as much out of sight as possible; let Nature be all in all, taking care that everything done by man shall be in the way of being adopted by her. If people choose that a great mansion should be the chief figure in a country, let this kind of keeping prevail through the picture, and true taste will find no fault.

I am writing now rather for writing's sake than anything else, for I have many remembrances beating about in my head which you would little suspect. I have been thinking of you, and Coleridge, and our Scotch Tour, and Lord Lowther's grounds, and Heaven knows what. I have had before me the tremendously long ell-wide gravel walks of the Duke of Athol, among the wild glens of Blair, Bruar Water, and Dunkeld, brushed neatly, without a blade of grass or weed upon them, or anything that bore traces of a human footstep; much indeed of human hands, but wear or tear of foot was none. Thence I passed to our neighbour, Lord Lowther. You know that his predecessor, greatly, without doubt, to the advantage of the place, left it to take care of itself. The present Lord seems disposed to do something,

but not much. He has a neighbour, a Quaker, an amiable, inoffensive man,[1] and a little of a poet too, who has amused himself, upon his own small estate upon the Emont, in twining pathways along the banks of the river, making little cells and bowers with inscriptions of his own writing, all very pretty as not spreading far. This man is at present Arbiter Elegantiarum, or master of the grounds, at Lowther; and what he has done hitherto is very well, as it is little more than making accessible what could not before be got at. You know something of Lowther. I believe a more delightful spot is not under the sun. Last summer I had a charming walk along the river, for which I was indebted to this man, whose intention is to carry the walk along the river-side till it joins the great road at Lowther Bridge, which you will recollect, just under Brougham, about a mile from Penrith. This to my great sorrow! for the manufactured walk, which was absolutely necessary in many places, will in one place pass through a few hundred yards of forest ground, and will there efface the most beautiful specimen of a forest pathway ever seen by human eyes, and which I have paced many an

hour when I was a youth, with some of those I best love. This path winds on under the trees with the wantonness of a river or a living creature; and even if I may say so with the subtlety of a spirit, contracting or enlarging itself, visible or invisible as it likes. There is a continued opening between the trees, a narrow slip of green turf besprinkled with flowers, chiefly daisies; and here it is, if I may use the same kind of language, that this pretty path plays its pranks, wearing away the turf and flowers at its pleasure. When I took the walk I was speaking of, last summer, it was Sunday. I met several of the people of the country posting to and from church, in different parts; and in a retired spot by the river-side were two musicians (belonging probably to some corps of volunteers) playing upon the hautboy and clarionet. You may guess I was not a little delighted; and as you had been a visitor at Lowther, I could not help wishing you were with me. And now I am brought to the sentiment which occasioned this detail; I may say, brought back to my subject, which is this,—that all just and solid pleasure in natural objects rests upon two pillars, God

and Man. Laying out grounds, as it is called, may be considered as a liberal art, in some sort like poetry and painting; and its object, like that of all the liberal arts, is, or ought to be, to move the affections under the control of good sense; that is, of the best and wisest. Speaking with more precision, it is to assist Nature in moving the affections, and surely, as I have said, the affections of those who have the deepest perception of the beauty of Nature, who have the most valuable feelings,—that is, the most permanent, the most independent, the most ennobling, connected with Nature and human life. No liberal art aims merely at the gratification of an individual or a class: the painter or poet is degraded in proportion as he does so; the true servants of the Arts pay homage to the human kind as impersonated in unwarped and enlightened minds. If this be so when we are merely putting together words or colours, how much more ought the feeling to prevail when we are in the midst of the realities of things; of the beauty and harmony, of the joy and happiness, of living creatures; of men and children, of birds and beasts, of hills and streams, and trees and flowers; with the changes of night

and day, evening and morning, summer and winter; and all their unwearied actions and energies, as benign in the spirit that animates them as they are beautiful and grand in that form and clothing which is given to them for the delight of our senses! But I must stop, for you feel these things as deeply as I; more deeply, if it were only for this, that you have lived longer. What then shall we say of many great mansions with their unqualified expulsion of human creatures from their neighbourhood, happy or not, houses which do what is fabled of the upas-tree?—that they breathe out death and desolation! I know you will feel with me here, both as a man, and a lover and professor of the Arts. I was glad to hear from Lady Beaumont that you did not think of removing your village. Of course much here will depend upon circumstances; above all, with what kind of inhabitants, from the nature of the employments in that district, the village is likely to be stocked. But for my part, strip my neighbourhood of human beings, and I should think it one of the greatest privations I could undergo. You have all the poverty of solitude, nothing of its elevation. In a word, if I were disposed

to write a sermon (and this is something like one) upon the subject of taste in natural beauty, I should take for my text the little pathway in Lowther Woods, and all which I had to say would begin and end in the human heart, as under the direction of the Divine Nature, conferring value on the objects of the senses, and pointing out what is valuable in them.

I began this subject with Coleorton in my thoughts, and a confidence, that whatever difficulties or crosses (as of many good things it is not easy to choose the best) you might meet with in the practical application of your principles of Taste, yet, being what they are, you will soon be pleased and satisfied. Only (if I may take the freedom to say so) do not give way too much to others: considering what your studies and pursuits have been, your own judgment must be the best: professional men may suggest hints, but I would keep the decision to myself.

Lady Beaumont utters something like an apprehension that the slowness of workmen, or other impediments, may prevent our families meeting at Coleorton next summer. We shall be sorry for this, the more so as the same

cause will hinder your coming hither. At all events, we shall depend upon her frankness, which we take most kindly indeed—I mean, on the promise she has made, to let us know whether you are gotten so far through your work as to make it comfortable for us all to be together.

I cannot close this letter without a word about myself. I am sorry to say I am not yet settled to any serious employment. The expectation of Coleridge not a little unhinges me, and still more, the number of visitors we have had; but winter is approaching, and I have good hopes. I mentioned Michael Angelo's poetry some time ago; it is the most difficult to construe I ever met with, but just what you would expect from such a man, showing abundantly how conversant his soul was with great things. There is a mistake in the world concerning the Italian language; the poetry of Dante and Michael Angelo proves that if there be little majesty and strength in Italian verse, the fault is in the authors, and not in the tongue. I can translate, and have translated, two books of Ariosto, at the rate, nearly, of 100 lines a day; but so much meaning has

been put by Michael Angelo into so little room, and that meaning sometimes so excellent in itself, that I found the difficulty of translating him insurmountable. I attempted, at least, fifteen of the Sonnets, but could not anywhere succeed. I have sent you the only one I was able to finish; it is far from being the best or most characteristic, but the others were too much for me.[2]

I began this letter about a week ago, having been interrupted. I mention this, because I have on this account to apologise to Lady Beaumont, and to my sister also, whose intention it was to have written, but being very much engaged, she put it off as I was writing. We have been weaning Dorothy, and since, she has had a return of the croup, from an imprudent exposure on a very cold day. But she is doing well again; and my sister will write very soon. Lady Beaumont inquired how game might be sent us. There is a direct conveyance from Manchester to Kendal by the mail, and a parcel directed for me, to be delivered at Kendal, immediately, to John Brockbank, Ambleside, postman, would, I dare say, find its way to us expeditiously enough; only you will have the

goodness to mention in your letters when you do send anything, otherwise we may not be aware of any mistake.

I am glad the Houbraken will be acceptable, and will send it any way you shall think proper, though, perhaps, as it would only make a small parcel, there might be some risk in trusting it to the wagon or mail, unless it could be conveniently inquired after. No news of Coleridge. The length of this letter is quite formidable; forgive it. Farewell—and believe me, my dear Sir George, your truly affectionate friend, W. WORDSWORTH.

[1] Mr. Thomas Wilkinson. See Poem, 'To his Spade.'
[2] 'Yes, Hope may with my strong desire keep pace,' etc.

Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont.

(*Probable date*, 1805.)

. . . We anxiously expected a letter yesterday from Lady Beaumont, hoping to hear that you continue to advance towards recovery, but no letter coming, we have many fears, and I can no longer defer writing, which, however, I would not do if I thought you would consider yourself as obliged to write again. For Heaven's sake, my dear friend, let us both be quite easy on this head. I assure you I do not measure the interest you take in me or mine either by the length or frequency of your letters: if I but hear from time to time how you are going on in health, or upon any occasion when my sympathies can give you comfort or pleasure, this is all I look for. Lady Beaumont is so good as to write often to my sister, so that through her we may learn these things; and, therefore, never think of writing to me. Should such an impulse of genial spirits as one sometimes feels at the thought of taking a walk, making a sketch, or playing a tune ever

prompt you to take up the pen, let me hear from you, but not otherwise; never trouble your head about it a moment.

I am glad my verses gave you pleasure; I have been hunting over and over in my mind through all that I have written for something to send you, and cannot pitch upon anything. I have composed lately two small poems in memory of my brother, but they are too melancholy, else I would willingly copy them. My sister, however, shall transcribe something or other, though I have not a single line in my possession which quite satisfies me for such a purpose. . . .

[Then follows a quotation from *The Prelude*, Book viii.—*From*
'What sounds are these, Helvellyn, that are heard'
to 'their calm abode.']

The above is from the beginning of one of the books upon my own earlier life. It has been extracted not so much from any notion of its merit, as from its standing more independent of the rest of the poem than perhaps any other part of it. The few lines which you will find on the next page require a long preface, which

my sister begs you will excuse. It is from her Journal of our tour in Scotland. We had visited the Trossachs and Loch Katrine, and were so much pleased as to return thither towards the end of our tour. We had been entertained at a ferryman's house, a Highland hut on the banks of the lake, and were again making our way thither on foot, a journey of about six miles, along the bank of the lake. My sister then proceeds thus: 'The path, or road (for it was neither one nor the other, but something between both), was the pleasantest I have ever travelled in my life for the same length of way; now with marks of sledges or wheels, or none at all, bare or green, as it might happen; now a little descent, now a level, sometimes a shady lane, at others an open track through green fields; then again it would lead us into thick coppice woods, which often entirely excluded the lake, and again admitted it by glimpses. We have never had a more delightful walk than this evening—Ben Lomond, and the three pointed-topped mountains of Loch Lomond, which we had seen from the Garrison, were very majestic under the clear sky; the lake was perfectly still, the air sweet and mild. I felt how much more

interesting it is to visit a place where we have been before, than it can possibly be the first time, except under peculiar circumstances. The sun had been set some time, when, being within a quarter of a mile of the ferryman's hut, and close to the shore of the calm lake, we met two neatly-dressed women without hats, who had probably been taking their Sunday evening's walk. One of them said to us in a friendly, soft tone of voice: "What, you are stepping westward?" I cannot describe how affecting this simple expression was in that remote place, with the western sky in front *yet* glowing with the departed sun. William wrote the following poem long after, in remembrance of his feelings and mine.' . . .

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, February 11th, 1806.

My dear Sir George,—Upon opening this letter, you must have seen that it is accompanied with a copy of verses.[1] I hope they will give you some pleasure, as it will be the best way in which they can repay me for a little vexation, of which they have been the cause. They were written several weeks ago, and I wished to send them to you, but could not muster up resolution, as I felt that they were so unworthy of the subject. Accordingly I kept them by me from week to week, with a hope (which has proved vain) that, in some happy moment, a new fit of inspiration would help me to mend them; and hence my silence, which, with your usual goodness, I know you will excuse.

You will find that the verses are allusive to Lord Nelson; and they will show that I must have sympathised with you in admiration of the man, and sorrow for our loss. Yet, considering the matter coolly, there was little to regret.

The state of Lord Nelson's health, I suppose, was such that he could not have lived long; and the first burst of exultation upon landing in his native country, and his reception here, would have been dearly bought, perhaps, by pain and bodily weakness, and distress among his friends, which he could neither remove nor alleviate. Few men have ever died under circumstances so likely to make their death of benefit to their country: it is not easy to see what his life could have done comparable to it. The loss of such men as Lord Nelson is, indeed, great and real; but surely not for the reason which makes most people grieve—a supposition that no other such man is in the country. The old ballad has taught us how to feel on these occasions:

> I trust I have within my realm
> Five hundred good as he.

But this is the evil, that nowhere is merit so much under the power of what (to avoid a more serious expression) one may call that of fortune, as in military and naval service; and it is five hundred to one that such men will not have attained situations where they can show themselves, so that the country may know in whom

to trust. Lord Nelson had attained that situation; and, therefore, I think (and not for the other reason), ought we chiefly to lament that he is taken from us.

Mr. Pitt is also gone! by tens of thousands looked upon in like manner as a great loss. For my own part, as probably you know, I have never been able to regard his political life with complacency. I believe him, however, to have been as disinterested a man, and as true a lover of his country as it was possible for so ambitious a man to be. His first wish (though probably unknown to himself) was that his country should prosper under his administration; his next that it should prosper. Could the order of these wishes have been reversed, Mr. Pitt would have avoided many of the grievous mistakes into which, I think, he fell. I know, my dear Sir George, you will give me credit for speaking without arrogance; and I am aware it is not unlikely you may differ greatly from me in these points. But I like, in some things, to differ with a friend, and that he should *know* I differ from him; it seems to make a more healthy friendship, to act as a relief to those notions and feelings which we have in common, and to give

them a grace and spirit which they could not otherwise possess.

There were some parts in the long letter which I wrote about laying out grounds, in which the expression must have been left imperfect. I like splendid mansions in their proper places, and have no objection to large or even obtrusive houses in themselves. My dislike is to that system of gardening which, because a house happens to be large or splendid, and stands at the head of a large domain, establishes it therefore as a principle that the house ought to *dye* all the surrounding country with a strength of colouring, and to an extent proportionate to its own importance. This system, I think, is founded in false taste, false feeling, and its effects disgusting in the highest degree. The reason you mention as having induced you to build was worthy of you, and gave me the highest pleasure. But I hope God will grant you and Lady Beaumont life to enjoy yourselves the fruit of your exertions for many years.

We have lately had much anxiety about Coleridge. What can have become of him? It must be upwards of three months since he landed at Trieste. Has he returned to Malta, think

you, or what can have befallen him? He has never since been heard of.

We are all well at present, and unite in affectionate wishes to you and Lady Beaumont.—Believe me, your sincere friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

I have thoughts of sending the verses to a newspaper.

[1] 'The Happy Warrior.'—ED.

Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont.

Grasmere, Tuesday, June 3.

My dear Lady Beaumont,—I arrived at happy Grasmere Sunday before last, *i.e.* ten days ago, so that you see I have taken time to breathe before I informed you how I sped; but I know I have an unlimited indulgence from you and Sir George in these respects. I found everybody well, little Dorothy the most altered,—I ought to say improved,—for she is grown the most delightful chatterer ever seen; all acquired in two months; nor is it the least of her recommendations that she is more delighted with me than with a new toy, and is never easy, if in my sight, when out of my arms.

Since I reached home I have passed the chief part of my time out of doors, much of it in a wood by the lake-side, a spot which you would love. The Muses, without any wooing on my part, came to me there one morning, and murmured a few verses, in which I did not forget

Grosvenor Square, as you will know if I ever take up the strain again, for it is not finished. We have had a great deal of talk about your summer visit; and we cannot satisfy ourselves entirely about the inn: we have fears concerning the sitting-room, which, having no prospect, you would find dull. There is a small cottage close to the lake with two pleasant sitting-rooms that look upon it, under and between two very respectable pollard oaks, and these two rooms are charming in summer; but then the house is ill-provided with bedrooms; but my sister shall describe it for you, and you shall judge.

I have received a very obliging letter from Mr. Price, who seems much pleased with what I said upon the Sublime. He speaks in warm terms of Sir George, and the many obligations he has to his friendship, and is kind enough to invite me to Foxley, holding out the inducement of the neighbouring scenery of the Wye.

I shall write to Sir George in a short time; meanwhile you will remember me most affectionately to him.—And believe me, my dear Lady Beaumont, most sensible of your goodness, most happy in possessing your friendship, and now faithfully yours, Wm. Wordsworth.

My dear Friend,—My brother has put his letter into my hands to direct and fold up, and I cannot let it go without a word. A thousand thousand thanks for all your goodness to him! and you have sent him home to us with looks and health so much improved that we knew not how to express our happiness.

I shall write as soon as we have an answer respecting the possibility of your having the house which my brother speaks of, the cottage near the Lake. I am afraid you would not be at ease in the small confined room at the inn. Adieu, my dear Lady Beaumont.—Believe me ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

D. WORDSWORTH.

I am very sorry you have had so much trouble about the Journal. You are very good in taking charge of my brother's concerns. I am afraid he left you a great deal to do, for he is a very bad manager of his own affairs, being so much used to leave all little things to us.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, Tuesday evening, June 17th.

My dear Friend,—You will rejoice with us in my sister's safety, and the birth of a son. There was something peculiarly affecting to us in the time and manner of this child's coming into the world. It was like the very same thing over again which happened three years ago; for on the 18th of June, on such another morning, after such a clear and starlight night, the birds singing in the orchard in full assembly as on this 15th, the young swallows chirping in the self-same nest at the chamber window, the rose-trees rich with roses in the garden, the sun shining on the mountains, the air still and balmy,—on such a morning was Johnny born, and all our first feelings were revived at the birth of his brother two hours later in the day, and three days earlier in the month; and I fancied that I felt a double rushing-in of love for it, when I saw the child, as if I had both what had been the first-born infant John's

share of love to give it, and its own. We said it was to be called William at first, but we have since had many discussions and doubts about the name; and Southey, who was here this morning, is decided against William; he would keep the father's name distinct, and not have two *William Wordsworths*. It never struck us in this way; but we have another objection which does not go beyond our own household and our own particular friends, *i.e.* that my brother is always called *William* amongst us, and it will create great confusion, and we cannot endure the notion of giving up the sound of a name, which, applied to him, is so dear to us. In the case of Dorothy there is often much confusion; but it is not so bad as it would be in this case, and besides, if it were only equally confusing, the inconvenience would be doubled. Your kind letter to my brother arrived yesterday, with your sister's most interesting account of her sensations on ascending the Mont Denvers. I shuddered while I read; and though admiration of the fortitude with which she endured the agony of her fear was the uppermost sentiment, I could not but slightly blame her for putting herself into such a situation, being so

well aware of her constitutional disposition to be so affected. For my own part, I do think that I should have died under it, and nothing could prevail upon me to undertake such an expedition. When I was in the whispering gallery at St. Paul's, I had the most dreadful sensation of giddiness and fear that I ever experienced. I could not move one foot beyond another, and I retired immediately, unable to look down; and I am sure when the sense of personal danger should be added to that other bodily fear, it would be too much for me; therefore I had reason to sympathise with your sister in the course of her narrative.

I hope you will find the inn tolerably comfortable, as I am informed that one of the upper rooms, which was formerly a bedroom, is converted into a sitting-room, which entirely does away our objections to the house for you; the upper rooms being airy and pleasant, and out of the way of noise. Among my lesser cares, and hopes, and wishes, connected with the event of your coming to Grasmere, the desire for fine weather is uppermost; but it will be the rainy season of this country, and we have had so much fine and dry weather, that we

must look forward to some deduction from our comfort on that score. We received your second letter with the tidings of the finding of the Journal, the day after we had received the first. You may be sure we were very glad that it was found. It is a delicious evening, and after my confinement to the house for these two days past I now doubly enjoy the quiet of the moss-hut, where I am writing. Adieu!—Believe me, my dear Lady Beaumont, your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

I have expressed myself obscurely about our objections to calling the child by William's name.[1] I meant that we should not like to call him but as we have been used to do. I could not change William for Brother, in speaking familiarly, and his wife could not endure to call him Mr. Wordsworth. Dorothy is in ecstasies whenever she sees her little brother, and she talks about him not only the day through, but in her dreams at night, 'Baby, baby!'

[1] The child was christened Thomas.—ED.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

June 24th, 1806.

My dear Friend,—I begin my letter with an expectation of being summoned at every moment to deliver it up, along with others which I have been writing, to my brother and Miss Hutchinson, who are going to meet the post at Rydal; but I cannot omit informing you how we go on, as I know you will be anxious about us; besides, we have received the box, etc., and it is fit that I should release your mind of all further care respecting its contents, which came in perfect safety, and have given general satisfaction, and great joy to your god-daughter (for poor Johnny is not here to look at the beautiful library which you have sent him), but could you see Dorothy, how she spreads her hands and arms, and how she exclaims over each book, as she takes it from the case, and the whole together—such a number!—(when by special favour she is permitted to view them), then you would indeed be repaid for the trouble

and pains you have taken! She lifts her arms, and shouts and dances, and calls out, 'Johnny, book! Dear godmother sent Johnny book!' She looks upon them as sacred to Johnny, and does not attempt to abuse them. She is also very much delighted with her little almanack, but not in such an enthusiastic manner; for I never saw anything like her joy over the whole library of books. But enough of this. I spoil a pen with every letter I write. The binding of the manuscript destined for Coleridge is exactly to our minds, and Mr. Tuffin is not only forgiven, but we feel a little compunction for the reproaches which slipped from us when we supposed it to be lost.

I am called for. My brother and Miss Hutchinson are ready. Adieu!—Yours ever,

D. WORDSWORTH.

Grasmere, 24th June.

Tuesday evening.—They were too late for the post this morning, and brought back my letter, which I open, to copy a part of a letter relating to Coleridge, which we have just received from Dr. Stoddart of Malta. He begins:

'As it is probable that you have neither heard

of nor from C. for some time, I have determined to write to you in order to relieve in some measure your anxiety and that of his family. I have not, however, any very precise information to communicate. The sum of the whole is that he is probably safe at Rome, but may be obliged to reside there privately, and perhaps under a borrowed name, till he finds an opportunity of returning either to Malta or England. He left this place in September last, intending to go through the kingdom of Naples to Trieste, and so through Germany home. On the 26th of September he wrote me a short note from Syracuse, which is the only letter that has been received from him at Malta. He was then on his way to Messina, and meant to go from thence to Venice or Trieste, having at these three places a credit of £500 on respectable bankers, correspondents of Mr. Noble, a friend of mine here. From Naples at the approach of the French in January he withdrew with a Mr. B., son of the Member for H., to Rome; but a little after his departure, sent a box of papers and other things to Mr. G. Noble, who with his family escaped to Messina, and took the box with him soon after

the French entered Naples in February. From this precaution, I conclude that C. wished to travel *incog.*, as he might with justice apprehend that the official character in which he acted here might expose him to suspicion; and, as the French so openly violate all the rights of neutrality, they might think fit to seize him even at Rome. However, I think he has sufficiently obviated all danger of that kind, and being with Mr. B., he will probably be in no want of money. I imagine his object will be to get to Trieste, which is now restored to the Emperor, and where his banker's credit will be of service to him.'

This letter is certainly not calculated to set us entirely at ease, for if there be need of so much caution there must be some danger, and we have reason yet to apprehend further delay; but we are furnished with a probable reason for his silence, and we may be satisfied that he is not in want of money, which is very comfortable. I am afraid the other side of the sheet will be scarcely legible. I wrote in great haste in the morning, and had hardly room left for Stoddart's letter. Adieu, dear Lady B.—Yours ever,

D. W.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, July 9th, Monday.[1]

My dear Friend,—My brother received Sir George's letter on Friday evening, and his intention of replying to it himself prevented me from writing to you, which I was going to do when Sir George's letter arrived; but my brother having been obliged to go with Miss Hutchinson for a few days to Park House, *I* take the pen merely to tell you what accommodations we are likely to have for you at the inn, and to give you our opinions and feelings respecting our journey into Leicestershire for the winter. I need not say how deeply sensible we are of Sir George's kindness and yours in this instance, and we have so many reasons to be grateful to you, that I am little inclined to dwell upon this particular one. In the first place, then, we seem to have no other spot to turn to, for there is not a house in this neighbourhood; and our continuing here during another winter would be attended with so many

serious inconveniences, especially to my brother, who has no quiet corner in which to pursue his studies, no room but that where we all sit (to say nothing of the unwholesomeness of these low small rooms for such a number of persons), that we feel that nothing short of absolute impossibility should prevent us from moving. Ever since my brother's return from London, we have thought about our removal to Coleorton as the only scheme in our power; but I abstained from speaking of it to you, thinking that at our meeting all things might be better explained. The solitude would be no evil to us with such a treasure of books, and even the dirty roads a trifling one, the house being so large that it would not be irksome or unhealthful to be confined there in rainy weather. But there is one circumstance which casts a damp upon our prospects, and is the only one that prevents us from looking forward to the journey with unmingled pleasure,—the being in your house and you not there; so near you, as it were, and not enjoying your society. On this account, we could not but have many regrets; therefore, if any house should become vacant in this neighbourhood

before the beginning of winter, of course it would be desirable to take it, and defer our journey till the end of next summer, when you will be there also—for I hope there will be no further delay in the finishing of your building.

One week of the month of July is gone by, and you thought it possible you might be with us before the end of the month, so I hope it will not be long before you have arranged your plans. As to the house at Grasmere, I think there is no doubt but that you may be very comfortable there. I daresay that you might have lodgings at Keswick (if you have no objections to being in the town), where you might be well enough accommodated for a week or a fortnight; but I believe there are no entire houses to be let even in the town, and I know there are none in the neighbourhood, therefore our removing thither is out of the question, for my brother could not endure the thought of living in the town, and we have all great objections to it. Now, if you wish for lodgings in Keswick, you must let us know as soon as you have settled your plans, and we will write to Mr. Edmondson. I have just begun to read Mr. Knight's book,[2] which

you were very kind in sending. The Lay of the Last Minstrel was also in the box, which we think must have come by mistake. We have two copies of our own sent to us by Mr. Scott. Adieu !—Yours affectionately,

D. WORDSWORTH.

[1] The year must be 1806.—ED.

[2] Doubtless the *Analytical Enquiry into the Principles of Taste*, by Richard Payne Knight.—ED.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

July 23d, Grasmere.[1]

My dear Friend,—I fear that there is little chance left of our seeing you here this summer, and with true sorrow do we resign the hope. I had always seemed to foresee that some would arise, yet when your letter reached us, I felt that my foresight had been of small use to me, the disappointment was so heavy. Let us trust, however, in the hope of better fortune next summer, and that we may be near to each other for a longer time than you could now have spared from your important engagements at home. We are all exceedingly concerned also for the cause which is likely to deprive us of the happiness of seeing you, and especially my brother, who has a great respect for Mr. Colly, and never fails to speak of the attentions he received from him, with a pleasing and grateful remembrance of his kindness.

A few minutes before your letter arrived William had set forward with his daughter on

his back, and our little nursemaid and I were on foot following after, all on our road over the high mountain pass betwixt Grasmere and Patterdale, by which road we were going to Park House, to remove the child from the danger of hooping-cough, which is prevalent at Grasmere. The letter was sent after us, and we halted by the wayside to read it. This was a sad damping at our setting out. We had, however, on the whole a prosperous journey. A young man assisted my brother in bearing the child over the mountains. We went down Ullswater in a boat, and arrived in the evening at Park House, about three miles further. Our little darling had been the sweetest companion that ever travellers had. She noticed the crags, the streams, everything we saw, and when we passed by any living creatures, sheep or cows, she began to sing her baby songs which she has learned from us, 'Baa! baa! black sheep,' and 'Curly cow bonny.' She was not frightened in the boat, but for half an hour she screamed dreadfully, wanting to be out and in the water. This was all the trouble we had with her in the whole journey, for she fell asleep, and did not wake till we landed. We found Johnny per-

fectly well, and overjoyed to see us. Poor fellow! he had met with an accident a few weeks before, which one cannot but lament, as it entirely mars the expression of his countenance. He fell through a hay-rack, and got a severe blow on his cheek, which, though there is no scar, has left an indention or hole in the cheek, which appears, to those who do not know him, like a dimple; and, indeed, it is like a dimple; but it has changed his rich, joyous smile into a silly simper. I have had a letter from an old servant, whose distresses my brother related to you, and to whom you so kindly sent the sum of £5. She overflows with gratitude; goes on to tell me that by the means of your liberality, and that of others who have been interested for her, she is in no worse condition than she was before the fire happened. Poor soul! She says, 'I can never be sufficiently thankful that our lives were spared. We were all fast asleep in bed, and, as God would have it, my little baby waked, and wakened me, and the flames were rushing in at the window.' She is an uncomplaining sufferer, for, since she left our home, she has endured very much from many causes, especially the cruelty of her husband, and sickness and death

of children, and her own weak health; yet, though she had no other means of support but the labour of her husband and her own for several years, she never uttered one expression which might induce me to think she needed any comfort which money could procure; quite the contrary, yet when we sent her any assistance, it was plain how much she needed it by her account of the manner in which she disposed of that little money, chiefly in fuel! Then comes this sorrow, and now again they are going into the house, which has been rebuilt, and she will patiently again enter upon a way of life which I know is utterly discordant with all her feelings, except a spirit of submission to the will of her husband, and the hope of providing a maintenance for her children. I had not intended to detain you so long with talking of this poor woman, but knowing that you would sympathise with me in the pleasure I feel in contemplating a conduct so delicate and disinterested with respect to money in a person placed in so low a rank in society, I went on, and was loath to stop.—Believe me, dear Lady Beaumont, your affectionate friend,

D. Wordsworth.

I have said nothing about our residence for the winter. The truth is that the thought of being in your house and not seeing you always hangs heavy upon us, and if we can meet with a place here (but I am afraid we shall not) we shall take it, and next autumn, if your house be still at liberty, we can spend two or three months near you. I must again add, however, that we do not dread any of the inconveniences you mention.

We left both John and Dorothy at Park House. William's disposition to procrastinate has yet prevented him from writing to Sir George, who will, he knows, excuse him. He is going on with The Recluse.

[1] No year is mentioned, but evidently it was 1806.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

August 5th.[1]

My dear Sir George,—I wrote to you a few days ago. I now write again under a considerable embarrassment of mind occasioned by the enclosed letter, which I wish you would be so good as to read after I have furnished you with the necessary preface.

In consequence of this house being too small for us, I have for some time wished to purchase, somewhere or other in this neighbourhood, a few acres of land, with a house attached to them, which might be made large enough by expending upon it £200 or £300. I have sought in vain for such a thing in this Vale, and at last I fixed upon a beautiful spot in Patterdale, which I think is worth £700, and for which I offered £800, the utmost farthing I was resolved to give, thinking it nothing but reasonable, as the property was not offered to sale, that I should pay £100 more than it was worth. Now, it happens that the property in question adjoins an estate

of a clergyman of considerable fortune, who also applied for it, and in consequence, chiefly, I believe, of this double application, the proprietors fixed upon it the price of £1000. Of course I gave up all thoughts of the thing, merely writing to the person whom I employed to manage the affair for me, that if he could get the estate for £800 he was to do so. The people stood to their demand of £1000. In this state of the business, Thomas Wilkinson, the Quaker, whom I mentioned to you in a letter some time ago, the writer of the enclosed, and my agent in the affair, mentioned the circumstance to Lord Lowther, as you will see in the letter, which I beg you would now read. The unhandsome conduct alluded to is that of the clergyman, to whom I wrote, stating my reasons for wishing to purchase this property, and begging him to give up his claim, as the property, I knew, was of no real consequence to him. My letter produced no effect but that of sending him to treat with the people in an ungentlemanly and underhand way.

I suppose you now to have read the enclosed, and your astonishment will be little less than mine. I could scarce believe my eyes when I

came to the conclusion. This good Quaker, for an excellent simple-hearted man he is, no doubt is eagerly waiting for a letter of thanks and joyful congratulation from me; and alas! I know not which way to turn me in the affair. Undo the bargain I cannot; to pay the whole money out of my own pocket would be an inhuman return to Lord Lowther for his generous kindness. Strange it is that W. could not perceive that, if I was unwilling to pay an exorbitant price out of my own money, I should be still more unwilling to pay it out of another's, especially of a person who had shown to me so much kindness, treated me with such respectful delicacy, and given such striking proof of his desire to apply his property to beneficent purposes.

My dear Sir George, I do not ask your advice in the case, for I must be obliged to act before I receive it, and how to act I am sure I do not know. In the first place, if I could possibly avoid it I would not wound the feelings of Thomas Wilkinson, who has been animated by the best and purest motives through the whole course of his innocent and useful life. He has been betrayed into this hasty step by imagining this purchase to be of far more consequence to me

than it really is. I was by no means *determined* to build upon it, but I wished to have such a place where I might do so if I liked; and, above all, I had no doubt that I could dispose of it at any time for as much as I meant to give for it. Why, I am led to say to myself, have I troubled you with this letter? I can only say that I have satisfaction in opening out my mind to you, and perhaps you may suggest something that will assist me to see my way, as I think now of writing to T. Wilkinson merely to say that I have received his letter, and shall be over at his house in a few days. In this case I may have time to receive your answer, for which I shall be most thankful. Pray address me at Mr. John Monkhouse's, Penrith, Cumberland.—Most affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

My sister will express my thanks to Lady Beaumont for her forethought about my accommodation at Coleorton. I ought not to have left this to a postscript.

[1] The year must be 1806.—Ed.

Postscript by Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont.

Moss-Hut, Wednesday morning.

Being compelled to give up all remaining hope of seeing you here this season, it is indeed time we should talk decidedly about our plans for the winter. In three months more, unless the frosts and winds spare some chance corner of this quiet nook, all the trees which are now rustling in the breeze with their green boughs will be leafless and bare. The prospect of seeing you, though but for a day or two, at Coleorton makes us look to the journey with entire satisfaction; and the moment we received your first letter we determined to seek no further for a house in this neighbourhood, except in case of Coleridge's wintering at Keswick. Should he determine so to do, if within three or four miles of Keswick (which is very improbable) a suitable house should be vacant, my brother will take it for the sake of being near to Coleridge. When we meet you will know how deeply we feel your goodness, my dear Lady Beaumont, in attending with such minuteness to our wants and comforts. I would

thank you now again and again; but something more than words is needed to express the habitual sentiments of gratitude and love with which we think of you.

As to the manner of our journey, we must not go in the car. Perhaps my sister might receive no injury, if she be tolerably strong, but we should be afraid for the little baby, and for Dorothy, she being liable to attacks of the croup whenever she is exposed to cold. We shall, therefore (that is, my brother and sister, the three children and I), travel in a postchaise, which we shall certainly 'fill,' as well as did Mrs. Gilpin when she repaired to Edmonton, 'her sister and her sister's child, herself and children three'; and our servant and the girl who helps us to take care of the children must go in the coach to the town nearest to Coleorton. Since the birth of Thomas we have had this girl, whom we find very useful, and could not now (having three children so young to look after) do without except at the expense of sacrificing all opportunities of leisure and quiet; at least leisure and quiet enjoyed in common by their mother and me, for one of us must be with them the day through. Having these two servants, there-

fore, we shall have no occasion for assistance from the farmer's servant except in case of accidents.

Mrs. Wordsworth is perfectly well, and thinks of going with William in a few days to Park House to see John and Dorothy, whom we are afraid we shall hardly be able to have at home again before we leave Grasmere, as hooping-cough is in every quarter of the Vale, and there are yet a great number of children who have not had it. The house seems strangely dull without them. Every day we may look for news of Coleridge's arrival. I thank you for taking the trouble to transcribe those excellent lines from Sir John Beaumont's poems. They interested us very much, and we wish for the pleasure of reading his works when we are on the ground which he and his brother trod. Adieu!—Your affectionate friend,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

I am sure you will enter into our feelings about the purchase of the estate. It is a most mortifying affair, and perplexing too, though nothing can be done to prevent completing the purchase.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, Aug. 15th.[1]

My dear Friend,—I have at last the happiness of telling you that Coleridge is actually in sight of his own dear country. He is now off Portsmouth, where he must remain to perform quarantine. A Mr. Russel, an artist, is with him, and by his means we have heard; for Coleridge has not written himself. I have no doubt (as Mrs. Coleridge thinks also) that he is afraid to inquire after us, lest he should hear of some new sorrow. We have only had one letter from him, written since our poor brother's death. Mr. Russel had written to his friends at Exeter, they to the Coleridges at Ottery, and the Coleridges to Mrs. C., so at least ten days of the time of his imprisonment must be gone by; but the letter does not mention when they arrived, nor the name of the ship. My brother, and sister, and little Thomas, are at Park House. My joy at Coleridge's return will be quite a burthen to me till I know that they too have received the news.

I never felt the want of them at home half so much as for these three last hours, since Mrs. Coleridge's note came. William intends calling upon Lord Lowther before his return. He hoped to find a letter from Sir George at Penrith, and intended writing to him. We were deeply affected by Sir George's last letter, which came the day before my brother and sister went to Park House. William said he should write again to him immediately. I write in great haste to save the post. God bless you, my dear friend! I hope we shall hear from you, when you next write, that Sir George has recovered his spirits after the severe and painful shock he has had; for death, when it comes to a young person, is a *shock* for the survivors, however truly we may feel that it was a merciful dispensation.—Adieu, my good and dear friend, yours ever, D. W.

When I next write I will transcribe the Sonnet of Michel Angelo, of which my brother sent Sir George the translation.

[1] The year was 1806.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, Aug. 21st, 1806.

My dear Sir George,—First let me congratulate you on Coleridge's arrival, and upon what is a still nearer and deeper subject of congratulation,—his recovery from a most dangerous illness, which prevented his writing to us. Their passage had been long irksome and dreadful, he having been ill, I believe, the whole of the time, and was much worse on their arrival, and while performing quarantine; so much so that his life was despaired of. He had dictated a letter to me under that feeling, to be sent to me in case he did not recover. Have we not reason to be thankful? As soon as he set his foot upon land he was greatly renovated, and last Monday, the day on which he wrote, was uncommonly well. He was at his friend Lamb's chambers in London. His letter is very short, and he does not say a word when we are to expect him down.

Many thanks for your prompt reply to my troublesome letter. I wrote in a great hurry,

and must have expressed myself ill, or your view of the subject could not have differed so much from mine. My uneasiness did not arise so much from being thus betrayed into an obligation to Lord Lowther, as from the specific circumstances attending that obligation. It is my opinion that a man of letters (and indeed all public men of every pursuit) ought to be severely frugal. If I ought to be frugal of my own money, much more ought I to be so of another person's, particularly of a generous-minded person. Now the object here was not worth an additional £200 of my own money, and therefore much less of Lord Lowther's. Had indeed the object been very important, such as putting me in possession of a place where I had long lived, and with which I had connected many interesting feelings, I might not have thought that any sense of honour or independence, however nice, ought to call upon me to shrink from such an act of kindness and munificence. But this was not the case here; the spot had little to recommend it to me but its own beauty, and Providence has dealt so kindly with this country that this is little distinction.

Applethwaite, I hope, will remain in my family for many generations. With my will it should

never be parted with, unless the character of the place be entirely changed, as I am sorry to say there is some reason to apprehend; a cotton-mill being, I am told, already planted, or to be planted, in the glen. I shall see the place to-morrow. The matter of your advice about building I have long laid to my heart; and it has (as is common in these cases) just answered the purpose of quickening the temptation to be dabbling. The *temptation* I like, and I should content myself with the pleasure it gives me through my whole life (I have at least built five hundred houses, in five hundred different places, with garden, grounds, etc.), but I have no house to cover me, and know not where to get one. But seriously, I do not mean to entangle myself with rashness, —this is what everybody has said, and means nothing. What then shall I say? My object is not to build a new house, only to add two rooms to an old one, and this on the supposition that we do not go southward with Coleridge.

I called at Lowther, and did not find his Lordship at home. Since my return hither I wrote him a letter, in which I confined myself to expressing my thanks for the great honour he had done me. I told Wilkinson frankly, yet in

as gentle a manner as I could, that I should not have accepted Lord L.'s offer if I had been consulted, and upon what principle I should have refused. This he took very well, and seemed quite happy that he had not consulted me. The spot I re-examined last Sunday, and a most beautiful one it is. How happy should I be to show it to you and Lady Beaumont! I don't know any place where more recommendation lies in so little room.

I have not yet thanked you for your former letter, which gave me very great pleasure. Lady Beaumont had mentioned your friend's death, but I did not know that he was one to whom you were so much attached. Do not be afraid of dividing any of your painful sensations with me. I know no passion where sympathy is of so much use as in grief. I like your idea of republishing your ancestor's poems, and promise myself great pleasure in reading them. If I could be of any service in editing the book, nothing would give me more satisfaction, either in the way of prefixing a Life, carrying the work through the press, or anything else.

As soon as we have seen Coleridge we shall be able to say something positive about our journey

to Coleorton; at present we indulge great hopes of seeing you.

The Vale is relieved of our harlequins, to the great loss of my daughter, who had conceived a great attachment for them and their doggy.

Farewell. Affectionate remembrance to yourself and Lady Beaumont from us all.—Ever yours, W. WORDSWORTH.

Keep T. Wilkinson's letter till we meet.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.[1]

My dear Friend,—I have put off writing to you for many days, hoping always that the next post would bring us a letter from Coleridge himself, from which some comfort might be gathered, and a more accurate estimate formed of the state of his mind. But no letter has arrived. I have, however, the satisfaction of telling you that he is to be at home on the 29th of this month. He has written to acquaint Mrs. Coleridge with this, and has told her that he has some notion of giving a course of lectures in London in the winter. This is all we know; I do not imagine he has mentioned the subject of the lectures to Mrs. C. Whatever his plan may be, I confess I very much wish he may not put it in practice, and for many reasons: first, because I fear his health would suffer from late hours, and being led too much into company; and, in the second place, I would fain see him address the whole powers of his soul to some great Work in prose or verse, of which the effect would be per-

manent, and not personal and transitory. I do not mean to say that much permanent good may not be produced by communicating knowledge by means of lectures, but a man is perpetually tempted to lower himself to his hearers, to bring them into sympathy with him, and no one would be more likely to yield to such temptation than Coleridge; therefore at every period of his life the objection would have applied to his devoting himself to this employment. But at this present time it seems almost necessary that he should have one grand object before him, which would turn his thoughts away in a steady course from his own unhappy lot, and so prevent petty irritations and distresses, and in the end produce a habit of reconcilement and submission. My dear friend, you will judge how much we have suffered from anxiety and distress within the few last weeks. We have long known how unfit Coleridge and his wife were for each other; but we had hoped that his ill-health, and the present need his children have of his care and fatherly instructions, and the reflections of his own mind during this long absence would have so wrought upon him that he might have returned home with comfort, ready to partake of the blessings of

friendship, which he surely has in an abundant degree, and to devote himself to his studies and his children. I now trust he has brought himself into this state of mind, but as we have had no letters from him since that miserable one which we received a short time before my brother mentioned the subject to Sir George, I do not know what his views are. Poor soul! he had a struggle of many years, striving to bring Mrs. C. to a change of temper, and something like communion with him in his enjoyments. He is now, I trust, effectually convinced that he has no power of this sort, and he has had so long a time to know and feel this that I would gladly hope things will not be so bad as he imagines when he finds himself once again with his children under his own roof. If he *can* make use of the knowledge which he has of the utter impossibility of producing powers and qualities of mind which are not in her, or of much changing what is unsuitable to his disposition, I do not think he will be unhappy; I am sure I think he ought not to be *miserable*. While he imagined he had anything to hope for, no wonder that his perpetual disappointments made him so! But suppose him once reconciled to that one great

want, an utter want of sympathy, I believe he may live in peace and quiet. Mrs. C. has many excellent properties, as you observe: she is unremitting in her attentions as a nurse to her children, and, indeed, I believe she would have made an excellent wife to many persons. Coleridge is as little fitted for her as she for him, and I am truly sorry for her. When we meet you at Coleorton I trust we shall have been with Coleridge long enough to know what comfort he is likely to have. In the meantime I will say no more on this distressing subject unless some change should happen much for the better or the worse. I hope everything from the effect of my brother's conversation upon Coleridge's mind; and bitterly do I regret that he did not at first go to London to meet him, as I think he might have roused him up, and preserved him from much of the misery that he has endured. Now I must speak of the delight with which we look forward to seeing you. We think that nothing will prevent our accepting your kind offer; for it is plain that Coleridge does not wish us to go to Keswick, as he has not replied to that part of William's letter in which he spoke of our plans for the winter. We shall therefore prepare

ourselves to be ready to set off at any time that you shall appoint, so as to be with you a few days before your departure from Coleorton; and happy indeed shall we be to turn our faces . . .

[1] This letter is undated, and is incomplete. It evidently belongs to the year 1806.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Nov. 10, 1806.

My dear Sir George,—I was moved even to weakness by your letter. It is indeed a great happiness to me to be beloved by you, and to think upon what foundation that love rests. We were as sorry to part with you as you could be to part with us; perhaps even more so, as I believe is almost always the case with those who are left behind. We did not see the rising sun, which you describe so feelingly; but the setting was as glorious to us as to you. We looked at it with great delight from your fireside; but were foolish enough—at least I was—to believe that we should have such every night; that it was a gift of our new situation, and so the colours and motions which touched you so much were thrown away upon me,—at least it seems so now. You know that at Grasmere the high mountains conceal from us in a great measure the splendour of a western sky at sunset. We have often regretted this, and we congratulated ourselves that even-

ing on the opportunity which our present comparatively flat situation would give us of enjoying a sight from which we had long been excluded. We have had one or two fine evenings since, but nothing like that first, which was, I think, the most magnificent I ever beheld. The whole day had been uncommonly fine. We have not yet rambled much about. Once I have been at the firwood with Miss Hutchinson, once at the pool with Mrs. W——, and once had a long walk with my sister about the house and in the kitchen garden. Your new building and its immediate neighbourhood improve upon me much. I am particularly pleased with the spot—a discovery since your departure—which Lady Beaumont has chosen, I conjecture, for a winter garden. It will be a delightful place. By the by, there is a pleasing paper in the *Spectator* (in the 7th vol., No. 477) upon this subject. The whole is well worth reading, particularly that part which relates to the winter garden. He mentions hollies and hornbeam as plants which his place is full of. The horn-beam I do not know, but the holly I looked for in Lady B.'s ground, and could not find. For its own beauty, and for the sake of the hills and crags of the North, let it be scattered

here in profusion. It is of slow growth, no doubt, but not so slow as generally supposed; and then it does grow, and somebody, we hope, will enjoy it. Among the barbarisers of our beautiful Lake region, of those who bring and those who take away, there are few whom I have execrated more than an extirpator of this beautiful shrub, or rather tree—the holly. This worthy, thank Heaven! is not a native, but he comes from far; and his business is to make bird-lime, and so down go these fair creatures of Nature wherever he can find them. (You know probably that bird-lime is made of the bark of the holly.) I would also plant yew, which is of still slower growth. One thought struck me too relating to the grounds, which I will mention. I should not be for planting many forest-trees about the house, by the side of those which are already at their full growth; when I planted at all there, I should rather choose thickets of underwood, hazels, wild roses, honeysuckle, hollies, thorns, and trailing plants, such as traveller's joy, etc. My reason, in addition to the beauty of these, is that they would never be compared with the grown-up trees, whereas young trees of the same kind will, and must,

appear insignificant. Observe my remark only applies to placing these young trees *by the side* of the others; where there is an open space of any size it does not hold.

Miss Hutchinson and I were at church yesterday. We were pleased with the singing; and I have often heard a far worse parson—I mean as to reading. His sermon was, to be sure, as village sermons often are, very injudicious: a most knowing discourse about the Gnostics, and other hard names of those who were *h*adversaries to Christianity and *h*enemies of the Gospel. How strangely injudicious this is!—and yet nothing so frequent. I remember hearing Coleridge say that he was once at Keswick Church, and Mr. Denton (you know him) was very entertaining in guarding his hearers against the inordinate vice of ambition, what a shocking thing it was to be a courtier, and sacrifice a man's hopes in heaven for worldly state and power. I don't know that I ever heard in a country pulpit a sermon that had any special bearing on the condition of the majority of the audience. I was sorry to see at Coleorton few middle-aged men, or even women; the congregation consisted almost entirely of old persons, particularly old

men, and boys and girls. The girls were not well dressed. Their clothes were indeed clean, but not *tidy;* they were in this respect a shocking contrast to our congregation at Grasmere. I think I saw the old man (not he with the spectacles) whose face, especially the eyes, Mr. Davie has drawn so well. Lady Beaumont will remember that I objected to the shoulders in the drawing as being those of a young man. This is the case in nature,—in this instance I mean; for I never saw before such shoulders and unwithered arms with so aged a face as in the person I allude to.

I have talked much chit-chat. I have chosen to do this rather than give way to my feelings, which were powerfully called out by your affecting and beautiful letter. I will say this, and this only—that I esteem your friendship one of the best gifts of my life. I and my family owe much to you and Lady Beaumont. I need not say that I do not mean any additions to our comfort or happiness which, with respect to external things, you have been enabled to make; but I speak of soul indebted to soul. I entirely participate your feelings upon your birthday: it is a trick of kings and people in power to make

birthdays matter of rejoicing. Children too, with their holiday and plum-pudding, rejoice; but to them, in their inner hearts, it is a day

> That tells of time misspent, of comfort lost,
> Of fair occasions gone for ever by.

I long to see Wilkie's picture. From Lady Beaumont's account, it seems to have surpassed your utmost expectations. I am glad of this, both because the picture is yours, and as it is an additional promise of what he is to do hereafter. No doubt you will read him my Orpheus of Oxford Street, which I think he will like. In a day or two I mean to send a sheet of my intended volume to the press; it would give me pleasure to desire the printer to send you the sheets as they are struck off if you could have them free of expense. There is no forming a true estimate of a volume of *small* poems by reading them all together; one stands in the way of the other. They must either be read a few at once, or the book must remain some time by one, before a judgment can be made of the quantity of thought and feeling and imagery it contains, and what (and what variety of) moods of mind it can either impart or is suited to.

My sister is writing to Lady Beaumont, and

will tell her how comfortable we are here, and everything relating thereto. Alas! we have had no tidings of Coleridge—a certain proof that he continues to be very unhappy. Farewell, my dear friend.—Most faithfully and affectionately yours, WM. WORDSWORTH.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Coleorton, Friday, 14th November.[1]

My dear Friend,—We like the place more and more every day, for every day we find fresh comfort in having a roomy house. The sitting-room, where by the fireside we have seen some glorious sunsets, we far more than like—we already *love* it. These sunsets are a gift of our new residence, for shut up as we are among the mountains in our small deep valley, we have but a glimpse of the glory of the evening through one gap called the Dunmail Gap, the inverted arch which you pass through in going to Keswick. On Wednesday evening my brother and I walked backwards and forwards under the trees near the hall just after the sun was gone down, and we felt as if we were admitted to a new delight. From the horizon's edge to a great height the sky was covered with rosy clouds, and I cannot conceive anything more beautiful and glorious and solemn than this light seen through the trees, and the majestic trees themselves; and

afterwards, when we went lower down, and had the church spire and your new house backed by the west, they had a very fine effect. We continued to walk till the sky was gloomy all over, and two lights (we supposed from coal-pits) on the hill opposite to the hall, where the grove stands whither you want to decoy the rooks, were left to shine with full effect, and they looked very wild. We have not been much further than your grounds (except to Ashby, whither we have gone several times on business). The roads, if you do not go very far from home, are by no means so bad as I expected; for instance, the Ashby road, till you come to the turnpike, is very well; afterwards, to be sure, it is shocking, and I have no doubt the Ashby people think we are marvellous creatures to have the courage to wade through it. In consequence of your hint my sister and I walked to the Hospital the next day, and the day after we sent John to school; and a proud scholar he is. He goes with his dinner in a bag slung over his shoulder, and a little bottle of milk in his greatcoat pocket, and never man was fuller of pride and self-importance. The poor old schoolmistress has been very ill, and is not yet able to attend to

the children herself; but her daughter said she now wanted nothing but good nursing. We saw her in bed, and were pleased to observe how clean and comfortable all things were about her. She had had an apothecary to attend her. She appeared to be very feeble; but she told us that she expected to be able to go into the school again in a day or two. We shall call to see her this afternoon. Peggy goes with John in the mornings, and Tom brings him home in the afternoon. Mr. Craig has planted honeysuckles beside the pillars at the door. I wish they may thrive, for in a few years the spot will be very beautiful if they do. It makes a charming walk, and I think the effect of the pillars when you are under the shed will be very elegant. We have requested Mr. Craig to plant some of the clematis or traveller's joy, a plant which is very beautiful, especially by moonlight in winter, grows rapidly, and makes a delicious bower. What above all things I delight in is the piece of ground you have chosen for your winter garden; the hillocks and slopes, and the hollow shape of the whole, will make it a perfect wilderness when the trees get up. The wall at the end which supports the bank is very handsome,—

that is, it will be so when it is overgrown; but I hope you will not wall the garden all round. The natural shelving earthy fence which it has at present might be made perfectly beautiful, as I should think. I recognised the old steps which are in Sir George's drawing, and oh! how very pretty that wych-elm cottage might be made; but go it must, that I see, being so very near your house; yet I will and must mourn for it. My sister and I are very fond of the parsonage-house, and should like to live there, as we said to each other one morning when we were walking beside it—if we could but persuade William to take orders; and he being a very 'delightful creature' you know, it would suit you, and we should all be suited. My brother works very hard at his poems, preparing them for the press. Miss Hutchinson is the transcriber. She also orders dinner, and attends to the kitchen; so that the labour being so divided we have all plenty of leisure. . . . I do not understand anything by that line of Michael Angelo but this, that he —seeing in the expression and light of her eye so much of the divine nature, that is, receiving from thence such an assurance of the divine nature being in her — felt therefrom a more

confirmed belief or sentiment or sensation of the divinity of his own, and was thereby purified. If I write more I shall have no room for the poem. God bless you, my good dear Lady Beaumont! Remember me kindly to Sir George.

STAR-GAZERS.

What crowd is this? what have we here! we must not pass it by;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
Long is it as a Barber's Pole, or mast of little Boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The Show-man chooses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy Square;
And he 's as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair;
Calm, tho' impatient, are the crowd; each is ready with the fee,
And envies him that 's looking;—what an insight must it be!

Now, showman! Where can lie the cause? shall
thy implement have blame?
A Boaster that, when he is tried, fails and is put
to shame?
Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in
fault?
Their eyes, or minds? or finally, is this re-
splendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we
have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never
can be dear?
The silver moon, with all her vales, and hills of
mightiest fame,
Do they betray us when they're seen? and are
they but a name?

Or is it rather that conceit rapacious is and
strong?
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to
do her wrong?
Or is it that when human souls a journey long
have had,
And are return'd into themselves, they cannot
but be sad?

Or does some deep and earnest thought the blissful mind employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed, a grave and steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine?

Or is it—last unwelcome thought!—that these spectators rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore prostrate lie,
Not to be lifted up at once to power and majesty?

Whate'er the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before;
One after one they take their turns, nor have I one espied
That does not slackly go away as if dissatisfied.

We shall be anxious to know how you find Lady Beaumont's health. I have kept back from speaking of Coleridge, for what can I say? We have had no letter, though we have written again. You shall hear of it when he writes to us.

[1] The year must be 1806.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.[1]

16th November, 8 o'clock, Sunday evening.

My dear Friend,—I write to you from the nursery fireside, and a very warm and comfortable spot it is; and seems more quiet for the gentle regular breathing of the two little boys, who are in bed at the other end of the room. I do not know what to say to you about poor Coleridge. We have had four letters from him, and in all he speaks with the same steadiness of his resolution to separate from Mrs. C., and she has fully agreed to it, and consented that he should take Hartley and Derwent, and superintend their education, she being allowed to have them at the holidays. I say she has agreed to the separation, but in a letter which we have received to-night he tells us that she breaks out into outrageous passions, and urges continually that one argument (in fact the only one which has the least effect upon her mind), that this person, and that person, and everybody will talk. He would have been with

us here before this time but for the chance of giving H. and D. the hooping-cough, and, on that account, he is miserably perplexed, for he has no other place to carry them to where they would be under the care of females on whom he could rely; and if he were to leave them with her, he must be obliged to return to fetch them, for she would not give them up to any one but him; and if he leaves them, and has to return, the worst part of the business will be undone, and he cannot possibly regain his tranquillity. As he says himself: 'If I go away without them I am a bird who has struggled himself from off a bird-lime twig, and then finds a string round his leg pulling him back.' My brother has written to advise him to bring the boys to us. . . . He has also given several other reasons which I need not detail. There is one sentence in one of C.'s letters which has distressed us very much, and indeed all is distressing; but it is of no use to enter into particulars. He says, after speaking of the weakness of his mind during the struggle: 'I cannot, therefore, deny that I both have suffered, and am suffering hourly, to the great injury of my health, which

at times alarms me as *dropsical.*' This confirms what we had observed in his appearance; but I trust these bad symptoms will wear away when he is restored to quiet, and settled in some employment. It is his intention to instruct the boys himself one part of the day, and the other part to send them to school to learn writing and arithmetic, and to have the advantage of being with children of their own age. I hope my brother's letter will make him determine to come with them here, and that I shall have to tell you that they are here before the end of this week.

My brother has been frequently with Mr. Gray since he received your letter, and has spoken to him about planting thickets in the grove. He has also frequently paced over and studied the winter garden, and laid some plans; but I will not anticipate what he has to say, for he intends writing to you himself when he has fully settled in his own mind what seems to him the best. We have had workmen near the house planting the other part of the enclosed ground. All they have done is already an improvement. The place looks the better even for the dead fence, it gives it a snug appearance;

and in a very few years there will be a nice sheltered walk. Mr. Gray is making the new path. He consulted my brother respecting the direction it should take.

You were very kind in transcribing the passage from Pascal. I entirely go along with you in your sentiments of pleasure and admiration. It is a beautiful passage indeed—very beautiful; but there is always a something wanting to the fulness of my satisfaction in the expression of all elevated sentiments in the French language; and I cannot but think, simple as the conception is, and suitable as is the expression, that if Pascal had been an Englishman having the same exalted spirit of piety and the same genius, and had written in English, there would have been more of dignity in the language of the sentences you have quoted, and they would have been more impressive. There is a richness and strength in the language of our own great writers that I could never perceive in the French; but I have not read much in French, except poetry and common light reading such as everybody reads, so I have little right to suppose myself a judge.

William has written two other poems, which

you will see when they are printed. He composes frequently in the grove, and Mr. Gray is going to put him up a bench under the hollies. We have not yet received a sheet from the printer. We have had no evening walks lately, the weather has been so stormy. On Saturday fortnight we had a terrible wind, which blew down a wind-mill on the moor. William and I went to Grace Dieu last week. We were enchanted with the little valley, and its rocks, and the rocks of Charnwood upon the hill, on which we rested for a long time. Adieu, my dear friend. Accept the best wishes and most affectionate remembrance of all our family.—Yours ever,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

[1] The postmark is Dec. 10, 1806.—ED.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.[1]

Friday evening.

My dear Friend,—We are in expectation every moment of poor Coleridge and his son Hartley. They were to leave Kendal on Wednesday, and if they had come as quickly as my brother and Miss H., they would have been here last night. C. says that Mrs. Coleridge intends removing southward in the spring, and is to meet him in London with Derwent, who till that time is to stay with her. . . . He writes calmly and in better spirits. Mrs. C. had been outrageous; but for the last two or three days she had become more quiet, and appeared to be tolerably reconciled to his arrangements. I had a letter from her last week—a strange letter! She wrote just as if all things were going on as usual, and we knew nothing of the intentions of Coleridge. She gives but a very gloomy account of Coleridge's health, but this in her old way, without the least feeling or sense of his sufferings. I do think, indeed, that the state of his health

will absolutely prevent him from lecturing. It is a sad pity that he did not formally decline accepting the proposal, as I believe his heart was never in it, and nothing but the dreamy and miserable state of his mind (which prevented him from *doing* anything) kept him from saying that he would *not* lecture. I trust, gloomy as his own apprehensions are (for he talks of a dropsy in the chest), that when he is more tranquil a tolerable state of health will return. As to drinking brandy, I hope he has already given over that practice; but *here*, I think, he will be tolerably safe, for we shall not have any to set before him, and we should be very loath to comply with his request if he were to ask for it. There may be some danger in the strong beer, which he used formerly to like, but I think, if he is not inclined to manage himself, *we* can manage him, and he will take no harm, while he has not the temptations which variety of company leads him into of taking stimulants to keep him in spirits while he is talking.

My brother, who is writing a long letter to you himself, which you will probably receive the post after this, has had his thoughts full

of the winter garden, as you will see. His poetical labours have been at a stand for more than a week. We have had boisterous and very rainy weather, which has kept us chiefly in the house; but yesterday the air was very mild, and to-day the sun shone from nine o'clock in the morning till he set in glory in the west. Then we had the moon, and William and I walked for more than an hour and a half in the grove. The hall looks exceedingly well by moonlight from the walk near the fish-pond (which, by the by, adds greatly to the effect of it). The turrets looked very beautiful to-night; great part of the front was in shade, and all the end of the house enlightened. There is one improvement to this house which seems to be wanted—a spout along the edge of the penthouse or shed; the rain-drops will otherwise entirely destroy the border of tuft and other flowers; besides, invery rainy weather the walk is often even plashy; and also—another reason for placing a spout—soft water (which might be caught by setting a tub under the spout) is very much needed for household purposes, the pump water being, though excellent, very hard. I have often intended to mention

to you, but have forgotten it when I wrote, that in reading my journal of our tour in Scotland, you must bear in mind that it is only *recollections* of the tour, therefore do not wonder if you or Sir George should detect some inaccuracies, often misspelt and even miscalled, for I never looked into a book, and only bore in mind my own remembrance of the sounds as they were pronounced to us. Add to this, that the last part was written nearly two years after we made the journey, and I took no notes. My sister and Miss Hutchinson beg to be affectionately remembered to you.—Believe me ever, my dear Lady Beaumont, your grateful and sincere friend, DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

Saturday morning.—No Coleridge last night, and it is now twelve o'clock, and he is not arrived; therefore we cannot expect him till the arrival of another coach, and if that be late, he will probably stay all night at Loughborough.

[1] The postmark is Dec. 22, 1806.—ED.

William Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont.[1]

My dear Lady Beaumont,—There's penmanship for you! I shall not be able to keep it up to the end in this style, notwithstanding I have the advantage of writing with one of your steel pens with which Miss Hutchison has just furnished me. I have a long work to go through, but first let me tell you that I was highly gratified by your letter, and I consider the request that I would undertake the laying out your winter garden as a great honour. You kindly desire me not to write, but I cannot enter upon my office till I have had your opinion on my intended plan, and solicited the improvement which your taste and intention, and those of Sir George, may suggest.

Before I explain my ideas I must entreat your patience. I promise you I will be as brief as may be, but, meaning to be minute, I fear I shall be tiresome. First, then, to begin with the boundary line. Suppose ourselves standing upon the terrace above the new-built wall: *that*, of

course, would be open, and we should look down from it upon the garden, and, winding round upon the left bank, I would plant upon the top of it, in the field, a line of evergreen shrubs intermingled with cypress, to take place of the present *hedges;* and, behind these, a row of firs, such as were likely to grow to the most majestic height. This kind of fence, leaving visible such parts of the cottages as would have the best effect (I mean the beautiful one with ivy, and the other, which is of a very picturesque form, but very shabby surface), I would continue all round the garden, so as to give it the greatest appearance of depth, shelter, and seclusion possible. This is essential to the *feeling* of the place, with which, indeed, I ought to have begun: and that is of a spot which the winter cannot touch, which should present no image of chilliness, decay, or desolation, when the face of Nature everywhere else is cold, decayed, and desolate. On this account, keeping strictly to the example of the winter garden in the *Spectator*, I should certainly exclude all deciduous trees, whatever variety and brilliancy of colour their foliage might give at certain seasons intermingled with the evergreens, because I think a

sufficiency of the same effect may be produced by other means, which would jar less with what should never be out of mind, the sentiment of the place. We will, then, suppose the garden to be shut up within this double and tall fence of evergreen shrubs and trees. Do you remember the lines with which Thomson concludes his *Ode on Solitude*?—

> Oh! let me pierce thy secret cell,
> And in thy deep recesses dwell;
> Perhaps from Norwood's oak-clad hill,
> When Meditation has her fill,
> I just may cast my careless eyes
> Where London's spiry turrets rise,
> Think of its crimes, its cares, its pain,
> Then shield me in the woods again.

In conformity to the spirit of these beautiful lines, I would make one opening, but scarcely more, in this boundary fence, which should present the best view of the most interesting *distant* object.

Having now done with the double ever-green fence, we will begin again with the wall; and, first, let me say that this wall with its recesses, buttresses, and towers, I very much admire. It should be covered here and there with ivy and pyracanthus (which probably you know), or any other winter plants that bear

scarlet berries, or are rich and luxuriant in their leaves and manner of growing. From the wall, going round by the left, the first thing we meet is a mound of rubbish which should be planted. Then, before we reach the ivied cottage, we come to a perpendicular bank or scar; this should be planted along the top, in addition to the double evergreen fence mentioned before, with ivy, periwinkle, and other beautiful or brilliant evergreen trailing plants, which should hang down and leave the earth visible in different places. From the *sides* of the bank also might start juniper and yew, and it might be sprinkled over with primroses. Coming to the second cottage, this—if not entirely taken away—should be repaired, so as to have nothing of a patchy and worn-out appearance, as it has at present, and planted with ivy; this, and the shrubs and trees, hereafter to conceal so much of the naked wall, as almost to leave it doubtful whether it be a cottage or not. I do not think that these two cottages would in an unwelcome manner break in upon the feeling of seclusion, if no window looking directly upon the garden be allowed. This second cottage is certainly not *necessary*, and if it were not here nobody would wish for

it; but its irregular and picturesque form, its tall chimney in particular, plead strongly with me for its being retained. I scarcely ever saw a building of its size which would show off ivy to greater advantage. If retained—which with a view to *what it is to become* I should certainly advise,—it ought to be repaired, and made as little unsightly in its surface as possible, till the trailing plants shall have overspread it. At first I was for taking this cottage away, as it is in such ruinous plight, but now I cannot reconcile myself to the thought;—I have such a beautiful image in my mind of what it would be as a supporter to a grove of ivy, anywhere beautiful, but particularly so in a winter garden; therefore let it stand.

Following the fence round, we come to the remains of the little quarry (for such I suppose the excavation to be, nearly under the wych-elm cottage); I would scratch the bank here, so as to lay bare more of the sand rock, and that in as bold a way as could be done. This rock, or *scar*, like the one before mentioned, I would adorn with trailing plants, and juniper, box, and yew-tree, where a very scanty growth would soon show itself. The next part of the fence we come

to in its present state is an unsightly corner, where is an old ugly wall (made still uglier with nettles and rubbish) which has been built to prevent the bank from falling in. Here I would plant, to cover this wall, a hedge of hollies, or some other evergreen, which should not be suffered to grow wildly, but be cropped, making a wall of verdure to ascend up to the roots of the fir-trees that are to be planted upon the top of the bank. This form of boundary would here revive the artificial character of the place in a pleasing way, preparing for a return to the new stone wall; the parts of the whole boundary thus, as you will perceive, either melting into each other quietly, or forming spirited contrasts. I must however not forget here that there is a space of boundary between this unsightly corner (where I would have the holly hedge) and the new stone wall; and this space would be diversified, first by the steps which now descend into the garden, and next, and most beautifully, by a conception which I have of bringing the water—which I am told may be done without much expense—and letting it trickle down the bank about the roots of the wych elm, so as to make, if not a waterfall (there might not be enough for that), at least

a dripping of water, round which might gather and flourish some of those vivid masses of water-plants, a refreshing and beautiful sight in the dead time of the year, and which, when cased in ice, form one of the most enchanting appearances that are peculiar to winter.

In order to be clear I wish to be methodical, at the risk, as I forewarned you, of being tedious. We will therefore begin with the wall once more. This, as the most artificial, ought to be the most splendid and ornamental part of the garden; and here I would have, betwixt the path and the wall, a border edged with boxwood, to receive the earliest and latest flowers. Within and close to the edging of boxwood, I would first plant a row of snowdrops, and behind that a row of crocus; these would succeed each other. Close under the wall I would have a row, or fringe, of white lilies, and in front of this another of daffodils; these also would succeed each other, the daffodils coming first; the middle part of the border, which must be of good width, to be richly tufted, or bedded over with hepatica, jonquils, hyacinths, polyanthuses, auriculas, mezereon, and other spring flowers, and shrubs that blossom early; and, for the autumn, Michaelmas-daisy,

winter - cherry, china-asters, Michaelmas and Christmas rose, and many other shrubs and flowers. I mentioned before what I would wish to have done with the wall itself. The path of which I have been speaking should wind round the garden mostly near the boundary line, which would in general be seen or felt as has been described; but not always, for in some places, particularly near the high-road, it would be kept out of sight, so that the imagination might have room to play. It might perhaps with propriety lead along a second border under the clipped holly hedge; everywhere else it should only be accompanied by wild-flowers.

We have done with the circumference; now for the interior, which I would diversify in the following manner. And to begin, as before, with the wall: this fronts nearly south, and a considerable space before it ought to be open to the sun, forming a glade, enclosed on the north side by the wall; on the east, by a ridge of rubbish to be planted with shrubs, trees, and flowers; on the west by another little long hillock, or ridge of the same kind; and on the south by a line of evergreen shrubs, to run from the southern extremities of the ridges, and to be broken by one or two

trees of the cypress kind, which would spire up without excluding the sun from the glade. This I should call the first compartment of the garden, to be characterised by ornament of architecture as in the wall, by showiness and splendour of colours in the flowers (which would be chiefly garden flowers), and in the choice of the shrubs. In this glade,—if the plan of bringing the water should not be found impracticable, or too expensive,—I would have a stone fountain of simple structure to throw out its stream or even *thread* of water; the stone-work would accord with the wall, and the sparkling water would be in harmony with the bright hues of the flowers and blossoms, and would form a lively contrast to the sober colours of the evergreens, while the murmur in a district where the sound of water (if we except the little trickling that is to be under the wych elm) is nowhere else heard, could not but be soothing and delightful. Shall I venture to say here, by the by, that I am old-fashioned enough to like in certain places even jets d'eau; I do not mean merely in towns, and among buildings, where I think they always are pleasing, but also among rural scenes where water is scarce. They certainly make a great show out of

a little substance, and the diamond drops of light which they scatter round them, and the halos and rainbows which the misty vapour shows in sunshine, and the dewy freshness which it seems to spread through the air, are all great recommendations of them to me; so much so, that, for myself, I should not be ashamed of seeing one here, if a fountain, which is a thing of more simplicity and dignity, would not answer every important purpose, and be quite unobjectionable. If we had a living stream bustling through rocks, as at Grace Dieu, and could decoy it among our evergreens, I should not think either of fountain or jets d'eau; but, alas! Coleorton is in no favour with the Naiads.

The next compartment (if you look at the accompanying plan you will clearly understand me) is to be a glade unelaborate and simple, surrounded with evergreens, and a few scattered in the middle. *N.B.*—The former glade to be entirely open with the fountain; and of this second glade so much of the ancient cottage as could be shown with effect would be the presiding image. No border or garden flowers here, but wild-flowers to be scattered everywhere. Then (still look at the plan) we come to a dark

thicket or grove, the path winding through it, under the other cottage; then the path crosses the outlet where the door leads into the high-road, which door ought to be entirely concealed, and led to under a thick arch of evergreen.

Proceeding with the paths, we cross the end of a long alley, of which I shall speak afterwards. We then are brought to a small glade or open space, belted round with evergreens, quite unvaried and secluded. In this little glade should be a basin of water inhabited by two gold or silver fish, if they will live in this climate all the year in the open air; if not, any others of the most radiant colours that are more hardy: these little creatures to be the 'genii' of the pool and of the place. This spot should be as monotonous in the colour of the trees as possible. The enclosure of evergreen, the sky above, the green grass floor, and the two mute inhabitants, the only images it should present, unless here and there a solitary wild-flower. From this glade the path leads on through a few yards of dark thicket, and we come to the little quarry, and this (adopting an idea of yours, which I had from Mr. Craig, and which pleases me much) I should fill with a pool of water that would reflect beauti-

fully the rocks with their hanging plants, the evergreens upon the top, and, shooting deeper than all, the naked spire of the church. The path would wind along on one side of the pool under the ridge of rubbish, the slope of which should be bare and grassy (if it will not in its present state grow smooth grass it should be seeded for that purpose). It should be planted only on the top, and with trees that would grow to the greatest height, in order to give the recess as much depth as possible.

You would appear to be shut up within this bottom, till, turning with the path round a rocky projection of the mound of rubbish, you are fronted by a flight of steps, not before visible, which will be made to bring you out of the quarry close under the clipt holly hedge spoken of before. Here you open into a large glade, one side formed by the trees on the mound of rubbish, the other by the holly hedge, and still further by those other steps near the wych-elm cottage, which now lead down into the garden; these steps, not visible till you come at them, and still further on by the principal object in the glade, the waterfall, for so I will call it, from the root of the wych elm.

Having passed through this glade, you go on a few steps through a thicket, and before you come to the new-built wall you cross the other end of the alley spoken of before,—this alley to run down from the boundary path the whole length of the garden in this part, as you will see in the plan. The alley to be quite straight, the ground perfectly level, shaded with evergreens; laurels I think the best, as they grow tall and so much faster than any other evergreen I know; the floor not gravelled, but green, which, when the trees overshadow the walk, would become mossy, so that the whole would be still, unvaried, and cloistral, soothing and not stirring the mind, or tempting it out of itself. The upper end of this alley should appear to be closed in by trees, the lower to be terminated by a rising bank of green turf which would catch the light, and present a cheerful image of sunshine; as it would always appear to do, whether the sun shone or not, to a person walking in the alley when the vista shall have become a complete shade.

Out of this alley, towards the middle of it, on the left side, should be a small blind path leading to a bower, such as you will find described in

the beginning of Chaucer's poem of *The Flower and the Leaf*, and also in the beginning of the *Assembly of Ladies*. This little parlour of verdure should be paved with different-coloured pebbles, chiefly white, which are to be found in great plenty sprinkling the sandy roads of this country; these wrought into a careless mosaic would contrast livelily, if the white were predominant, with the evergreen walls and ceiling of this apartment. All around should be a mossed seat, and a small stone table in the midst. I am at a loss what trees to choose for this bower. Hollies (which would be clipped in the inside, so that the prickles would be no annoyance) I should like best, but they grow so slowly.

I have now mentioned everything of consequence. You will see by the plan that there were several spaces to be covered with evergreens, where there might or might not be bypaths, as you should like—one by way of specimen I have chalked out (see the plan) along the foot of one of the ridges of rubbish. These intermediate plantations, when they get up, will entirely break any unpleasing formality, which the alley and bower, or any other parts of the garden, might otherwise give to it, when looked at from above. If you add

to these features or passages a seat in some sunny spot, or perhaps a small shed or alcove, you have introduced as much variety within the compass of an acre as my fancy is capable of suggesting.

I had some thoughts that it might be possible to scoop out of the sandy rock a small cell or cavern on the stony side of the quarry, but the rock there is not continuous or firm enough. That part of the rock on which the decayed cottage stands, as it is much firmer, might perhaps admit of something of this kind with good effect. Thus laid out, the winter garden would want no variety of colouring beyond what the flowers and blossoms of many of the shrubs, such as mezereon and laurustinus, and the scarlet berries of the evergreen trees, and the various shades of green in their foliage would give. The place is to be consecrated to Winter, and I have only spoken of it in that point of view, confining myself to the time when the deciduous trees are not in leaf. But it would also be a delightful retreat from the summer sun. We think, in this climate only, of evergreens as a shelter from the cold, but they are chiefly natives of hot climates, and abound most there. The woods of Africa are full of them.

A word before I conclude: I have only given the garden two settled inhabitants, the pair of fishes in the pool; but, in the early spring, bees —much more attended to in the stillness of that season—would murmur round the flowers and blossoms, and all the winter long it would be enlivened by birds, which would resort thither for covert. We never pass in our evening walk the cluster of holly bushes, under one of which Mr. Craig has placed my seat, but we unsettle a number of small birds which have taken shelter there for the night. The whole bush seems in a flutter with them, while they are getting out of it. Mentioning holly, I must defend Mr. Craig for having fallen in with my proposal of placing me a seat there. Since Burns's time the holly has been a poetical tree as well as the laurel. His Muse in the poem of *The Vision* takes leave of him in this manner—

> 'And wear thou this'—she solemn said,
> And bound the Holly round my head:
> The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
> Did rustling play;
> And, like a passing thought, she fled
> In light away.

With respect to trees, shrubs, and flowers, Mr. Craig has a considerable collection. You might

add to these by your suggestions, and it might be worth your while for this purpose to take the trouble of visiting some large nursery garden in the neighbourhood of London, and to consult some of your friends.

I am sensible that I have written a very pretty romance in this letter, and when I look at the ground in its present state, and think of what it must continue to be for some years, I am afraid that you will call me an enthusiast and a visionary. I am willing to submit to this, as I am seriously convinced that if proper pains were taken to select healthy and vigorous plants, and to forward their growth, less than six years would transform . . .[2] to something that might be looked at with . . .[2] fifty would make it a paradise. O that I could convert my little Dorothy into a fairy to realise the whole in half a day!

As to the thickets under the forest trees in the walks about the Hall, I have pressed Mr. Craig, and his wishes are good; but lately he has seemed fully occupied: and, to speak the truth, as he has very cheerfully given up the winter garden to my control, I do not like to intermeddle much with the other. It looks like taking the whole of the intellectual part from

him, which would dispirit him, and be both unjust and impolitic, as he has a good taste, and seems a truly respectable man. He has already, in a general way, had my opinion, which I will continue at all favourable opportunities to remind him of. He has constructed the new walk with judgment, and a sweet spot it is. There are a few hollies here which have an excellent effect; I wish almost the whole hedge to be made of them, as they would be comfortable in winter, excluding the field, which is cold, and of no beauty; and in summer, by being intermingled with wild roses, and hung with honeysuckles, they would be rich and delightful. I never saw so beautiful a shrub as one tall holly which we had near a house we occupied in Somersetshire; it was attired with woodbine, and upon the very top of the topmost bough that 'looked out at the sky' was one large honeysuckle flower, like a star, crowning the whole. Few of the more minute rural appearances please me more than these, of one shrub or flower lending its ornaments to another. There is a pretty instance of this kind now to be seen near Mr. Craig's new walk—a bramble which has furnished a wild rose with its green leaves, while the rose in turn

with its red hips has to the utmost of its power embellished the bramble. Mr. Grahame in his *Birds of Scotland* has an exquisite passage upon this subject, with which I will conclude—

> The hawthorn there,
> With moss and lichens grey, dies of old age.
> Up to the upmost branches climbs the rose
> And mingles with the fading blooms of May,
> While round the brier the honeysuckle wreaths
> Entwine, and with their sweet perfume embalm
> The dying rose.

My dear Lady Beaumont, I have now written you the longest letter I ever wrote in my life; Heaven forbid that I should often draw so largely upon the patience of my friends.—Farewell, and may this and all our . . . W. W.

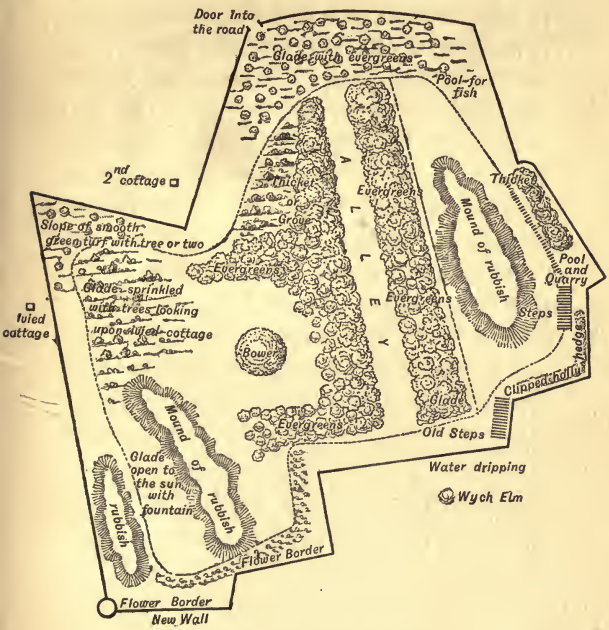
[1] Evidently Dec. 1806.—ED.

[2] The MS. is here defective.—ED.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.[1]

Coleridge and his son Hartley arrived on Sunday afternoon. My dear Lady Beaumont, the pleasure of welcoming him to your house mingled with our joy, and I think I never was more happy in my life than when we had had him an hour by the fireside: for his looks were much more like his own old self, and though we only talked of common things, and of our friends, we perceived that he was contented in his mind, and had settled things at home to his satisfaction. He has been tolerably well and cheerful ever since, and has begun with his books. Hartley, poor boy! is very happy, and looks uncommonly well; but we are afraid of the hooping-cough, for there is now no doubt that the cough which we have *is* the hooping-cough. Thomas is better than when I wrote on Saturday. I long to know your opinion and Sir George's of my brother's plan of the winter garden. (Coleridge (as we females are also) is much delighted

with it, only he *doubts* about the fountain, and he thinks it is possible that an intermingling of



PLAN OF THE WINTER GARDEN.

birch-trees somewhere, on account of the richness of the colour of the naked twigs in winter,

might be an advantage; I may add also from myself, that we have often stood for half an hour together at Grasmere on a still morning to look at the rain-drops or hoar-frost glittering in sunshine upon the birch twigs; the purple colour and the sparkling drops produce a most enchanting effect. All our family except the three children (for Dorothy is of their party) are gone to Grace Dieu. The fineness of the morning tempted them, and I hope they will not be much fatigued as they will take a much shorter road than my brother and I had the luck to find. God bless you, my kind good friend. We shall drink a health to you on Christmas Day. You may remember that it is my birthday; but in my inner heart it is never a day of jollity.—Believe me, ever yours, D. WORDSWORTH.

Coleorton, Tuesday 23d.

P.S.—Coleridge intended writing to you or Sir George to-day, or to both, and did not go to Grace Dieu.

[1] Postmark, Dec. 25, 1806.

COLERIDGE'S POEM TO WORDSWORTH, AS GIVEN IN A LETTER FROM HIM TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT IN JANUARY 1807.

To WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. Composed for the greater part on the same night after the finishing of his recitation of the Poem in thirteen Books, on the Growth of his own Mind.

O Friend! O Teacher! God's great gift to me!
Into my heart have I received that lay
More than historic, that prophetic lay
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
Of the foundations and the building up
Of thy own spirit thou hast loved to tell
What *may* be told, by words revealable:
With heavenly breathings, like the secret soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickening in the heart,
Thoughts that obey no mastery of words,
Pure self-beholdings! theme as hard as high,
Of *smiles* spontaneous and mysterious *fear*,
The first-born they of Reason and twin birth!
Of tides obedient to external force,
And currents self-determined, as might seem,
Or by some inner power! of moments awful,

Now in thy hidden life, and now abroad,
When power stream'd from thee, and thy soul received
The light reflected, as a light bestow'd!
Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,
Hyblæan murmurs of poetic thought,
Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens
Native or outland, lakes and famous hills;
Or on the lonely high-road, when the stars
Were rising; or by secret mountain streams,
The guides and the companions of thy way!
Of more than Fancy—of the *social sense*
Distending, and of man beloved as man,
Where France in all her towns lay vibrating,
Even as a bark becalm'd on sultry seas
Quivers beneath the voice from Heaven, the burst
Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud
Is visible, or shadow on the main!
For thou wert there, thy own brows garlanded,
Amid the tremor of a realm aglow!
Amid a mighty nation jubilant!
When from the general heart of human kind
Hope sprang forth, like an armèd deity!
Of that dear hope, afflicted and struck down,
So summon'd homeward; thenceforth calm and sure,

As from the watch-tower of man's absolute self,
With light unwaning on her eyes, to look
Far on—herself a glory to behold,
The Angel of the Vision! Then (last strain)
Of duty, chosen laws controlling choice,
Action and joy! an Orphic tale indeed,
A tale divine of high and passionate thoughts,
To their own music chanted!
O great Bard!
Ere yet the last strain dying awed the air,
With steadfast eyes I saw thee in the choir
Of ever-enduring men. The truly great
Have all one age, and from one visible space
Shed influence: for they, both power and act,
Are permanent, and time is not with them,
Save as it worketh for them, they in it.
Nor less a sacred roll than those of old,
And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame
Among the archives of mankind, thy work
Makes audible a linkèd song of truth,—
Of truth profound, a sweet continuous song
Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes!
Dear shall it be to every human heart,
To me how more than dearest! me, on whom
Comfort from thee, and utterance of thy love,
Came with such heights and depths of harmony,

Such sense of wings uplifting, that its might
Scatter'd and quell'd me, till my thoughts became
A bodily tumult; and thy faithful hopes,
Thy hopes of me, dear friend! by me unfelt!
Were troublous to me, almost as a voice,
Familiar once, and more than musical;
As a dear woman's voice to one cast forth,
A wanderer with a worn-out heart forlorn,
'Mid strangers pining with untended wounds.
O friend! too well thou know'st, of what sad years
The long suppression had benumb'd my soul,
That, even as life returns upon the drown'd,
The unusual joy awoke a throng of pains—
Keen pangs of Love, awakening, as a babe,
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart!
And fears self-will'd, that shunn'd the eye of hope,
And hope that scarce would know itself from fear;
Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain;
And all, which I had cull'd in wood-walks wild.

And all which patient toil had rear'd, and all
Commune with THEE had open'd out—but flowers
Strew'd on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!

That way no more! and ill beseems it me,
Who came a welcomer, in herald's guise,
Singing of glory and futurity,
To wander back on such unhealthful road
Plucking the poisons of self-harm! and ill
Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths
Strew'd before thy advancing! Thou too, Friend!
Impair thou not the memory of that hour
Of thy communion with my nobler mind
By pity or grief, already felt too long!
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.
The tumult rose and ceased: for peace is nigh
Where wisdom's voice has found a list'ning heart.
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms
The halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours,
Already on the wing!
Eve following Eve,
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of home
Is sweetest! moments, for their own sake hail'd,

And more desired, more precious for thy song!
In silence listening, like a devout child,
My soul lay passive; by the various strain
Driven as in surges now, beneath the stars,
With momentary[1] stars of her own birth,
Fair constellated foam, still darting off
Into the darkness; now a tranquil sea,
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.
And when—O Friend! my comforter! my guide!
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength!
Thy long-sustained song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased—yet thou thyself
Wert still before mine eyes, and round us both
That happy vision of beloved faces—
(All whom, I deepliest love—in one room all!)
Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close,
I sate, my being blended in one thought,
(Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)
Absorb'd; yet hanging still upon the sound—
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Jany. 1807.

1 Annex, as an illustrative note, the descriptive passage in Latyrane's first letter, 'The Friend,' p. 220, l. 13, 'A beautiful white cloud of foam,' etc.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT; *sent from Coleorton.*

Saturday Morning.[1]

My dear Friend,—We should have been very unjust to you if we had not felt ourselves as free as before. We were only induced to mention the circumstance that, in case any complaints should be made to you, you might be prepared to meet these with a perfect knowledge of the state of the case as far as we were concerned. And I must take this opportunity of repeating again that we are as perfectly at home as ever we were in our lives, and have never once suffered from that sense of difference or any of those little wants which you speak of.

We use all that you have left for us with freedom exactly as if it were our own, only, believe me, with more pleasure for your sakes. It is a most delightful morning. My brother and sister are gone to the winter garden. He visits the workmen generally twice in the day, and one of

us accompanies him; and when it is pleasant we afterwards walk in the grove; hundreds and hundreds of times have we paced from one end of that walk to the other. When the air is calm we take the whole of the walk; but in windy weather we stop before we come to the pond. The seat under the hollies is a great comfort to us.

My brother makes no complaints of Mr. Craig; he is very willing to give his opinion respecting the manner in which my brother's ideas are to be executed. I believe he may be inwardly rather petted; for he gives no *opinion* whatever; and we had long ago found out that his character was exactly what you describe—very obstinate, and somewhat self-conceited; withal industrious, ingenious, and faithful. You have misunderstood me respecting the floor of the alley. It is simply meant to be *green-grown*, which it will in a short time be with short moss after there is any shade. The moss will not be soft; it will be merely a gravel walk mossed over. My brother wishes the alley not merely to be screened at the sides but over-arched. Alas! it will need a long time for this, however tall and strong the evergreens may be when they are planted. Coleridge

is pretty well at present, though ailing at some time in every day. He does not take such strong stimulants as he did, but I fear he will never be able to leave them off entirely. He drinks ale at night and mid-morning and dinner-time; and, according to your desire, we have got some from Loughborough. Hartley is thoroughly happy. He spends a great deal of time in Mr. Ward's room; sometimes drinks tea and dines with him, for Mr. Ward takes to him exceedingly. Little Dorothy also continues to be in high favour with him.

Adieu, my good friend.—Believe me, ever affectionately yours, D. WORDSWORTH.

Excuse haste.—Mr. Bailey is very attentive and kind to us. I have opened my letter to ask you if you have Cowper's Translation of Homer. We do not want it unless you have it, or have a desire to purchase it. Coleridge says that the *last* edition of Bruce's 'Travels' is a book that you ought by all means to have. He does not know the name of the editor, but it is published by Longman. If you purchase it we should be very glad to have the reading of it. William and I were in the inside of the new house yesterday.

The upper rooms are very much nearer being finished than when we saw them last. William has thought about the laying out of the piece of ground before the house, but he has not yet made up his mind.

[1] The postmark is Jan. 27, 1807.—ED.

W. Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont.[1]

My dear Lady Beaumont,—Lord Redesdale's letter contains several things that will be of use to us; I must however make two or three remarks upon it. Our garden is to be a winter garden, a place of comfort and pleasure from the fall of the leaf to its return—nearly half of the year. Great part of this time you now perhaps pass in London, but if you live that probably will not always be so. Infirmities come on with age, that render tranquillity every year more welcome and more necessary. Lord Redesdale seems to have overlooked this, as far as the greatest part of his letter applies to a summer garden. His plan of avoiding expense in digging, weeding, and mowing—particularly the last,—may be carried too far; a wilderness of shrubs is a delightful thing as part of a garden, but only as a part. You must have open space of lawn, or you lose all the beauty of outline in the different tufts or islands of shrubs, and even in many instances in their individual

forms. This lawn cannot be had without mowing. Digging and weeding ought to be avoided as much as possible; and his method is a good one. With his Lordship, I should wish my strength to lie in perennial plants and flowers; but a small quantity of annuals, such as flower very late, may with little trouble and great advantage be interspersed among the others. His objection to an over-arched walk of evergreens, except for summer, at first appears well founded; but there is an oversight in it. In summer you may have a shade of *deciduous* trees or plants; but what are you to do in April or March, and sometimes even in February, when the heat and glare of the sun are often oppressive, notwithstanding the general cloudiness of our climate? For my own part, I can say with truth that in the month of April I have passed many an hour under the shade of a green holly, glad to find it in my walk, and unwilling to quit it because I had not courage to face the sun. Our winter garden is four parts out of five planned for the sun. If the alley or bower, the only parts exclusively designed for shade, should appear too damp or gloomy, you pass them by; but I am sure this will not always be the case; and even in those times when it is so,

will not a peep into that gloom make you enjoy the sunshine the more? But the alley I designed for March and April, when there is often a heat in the sun, and a conflict of sun and wind, which is both unpleasant and dangerous, and from which neither walls nor bare leafless trees can protect you. . . . His Lordship's practical rules about making walks, propagating plants, etc., seem all to be excellent, and I much like his plan of a covered walk of vines—but not for our own winter garden.

I shall read the whole to Mr. Craig. He and I propose to go to a nursery garden about fourteen miles off to procure such plants as we are most likely to want. I would not have them bought of any great size; it is a needless expense; and surely it will be some pleasure to see them grow up as from infancy. I never saw any American plants growing with their bog-earth about them, and know not whether it has an unsightly appearance. If not, it certainly would be advisable to have some of the most brilliant in the first compartment of the garden—I mean than under the wall. This is to be the most splendid and adorned. I have removed the rubbish from under the wall; part of it is thrown upon the ridge

running from the wall on the right, and part against the straight hedge between the two ivied cottages. I am afraid we must give up the fountain, as Mr. Craig tells me the quantity of water will be too small to produce any effect even in winter. This consideration does not sway with me much; but Captain B—— told me there would be little or *none* sometimes in summer, and upon reflection I think this would be so melancholy, and would make such open declaration of the poverty of the land, that it is better to abandon the idea. We may easily have enough for as many pools or basins as we like.

Before I conclude I will add two or three words in further explanation of my general plan. The first compartment, as I have said, is to be as splendid as possible; to be divided by a fence of shrubbery twelve feet in width, interspersed with cypress. My present thought is to have that side of this fence which looks towards the first compartment to consist probably altogether of laurustinus rather than of a variety of plants; plants in rows or masses in this way always are more rich and impressive. The next compartment, of which the ivied cottage is to be the master object, I meant, in contrast to the

preceding one, to present the most delightful assemblage of English winter shrubs and flowers, mingled with some foreign shrubs, as are so common in English cottage gardens as to be almost naturalised. Then comes the second cottage, which I cannot find in my heart to pull down; and I am sure it may be repaired in a manner that will give no offence. I do not mean the encircling path to pass *through* the glade with the gold and silver fish, but only on one side of it, so that it may be entered or not at pleasure. The quarry will be a delightful spot; but this, with the English spire that will so feelingly adorn it, I would have in all its ornaments entirely English. From it we should pass to the clipped holly or boxwood hedge and its accompanying glade, and this should be mixed, and elaborate in its ornaments: something midway betwixt the compartment under the wall and the rest of the garden.

Farewell.—Most affectionately yours and Sir George's, WM. WORDSWORTH.

[1] The postmark is Feb. 3, 1807.—ED.

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